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ARIOSTO'S ORLANDO FURIOSO.

Translated by W. S. Rose.

VOL. I.

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THE

ORLANDO FURIOSO.

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE,

FROM THE ITALIAN OF

LUDOVICO ARIOSTO,

WITH NOTES

BY

WILLIAM STEWART ROSE.

New Edition.

ILLUSTRATED WITH ENGRAVINGS ON STEEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

LONDON:
HENRY G. BOHN, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.
1858.

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TO

SIR WALTER SCOTT,

OF ABBOTSFORD, BART.

Who persuaded me to resume the present work, which had been thrown aside, on the ground that such labour was its own reward.

Scott, for whom Fame a gorgeous garland weaves,
Who what was scattered to the wasting wind,
As grain too coarse to gather or to bind,
Bad'st me collect and gird in goodly sheaves;

If this poor seed hath formed its stalk and leaves,
Transplanted from a softer clime, and pined,
For lack of southern suns, in soils unkind,
Where Ceres or Italian Flora grieves;

And if some fruit, however dwindled, fill
The doubtful ear, though scant the crop and bare,
(Ah! how unlike the growth of Tuscan hill,
Where the glad harvest springs behind the share *)
Praise be to thee! who taught me that to till
Was sweet, however paid the peasant's care.

WILLIAM STEWART ROSE.

* A second wheat harvest follows closely upon the first in some parts of Tuscany.

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MEMOIR.

William Stewart Rose was the second son of the Right Hon. George Rose of Cuffnells, Treasurer of the Navy, &c., so long the friend and useful ally of Mr. Pitt. He was born in 1775, and educated first at Eton, (where he left a record of his classical attainments, in the *Musæ Etonenses*,) and subsequently at Cambridge, but quitted the University after a short residence to take a seat in Parliament, which he vacated on receiving the office of Reading Clerk to the House of Lords. His literary tendencies soon manifested themselves, and at the suggestion of his father, altogether a practical man, he began "A Naval History of the late War," of which the first and only volume was published in 1802. The next year, indulging the bent of his own inclinations, which tended strongly to elegant literature, he translated and adapted from the French versions the Romance of "Amadis de Gaul." This was followed in 1807 by the Romance of "Partenopex de Blois," translated into verse from the French of M. Le Grand, to which he appended his beautiful ballad of "The Red King;" and in 1810 he published a quarto volume of poems entitled "the Crusade of St. Louis and King Edward the Martyr." A few years afterwards, he visited the East, and then resided two years in Italy, with the language and literature of which country he made himself most accurately acquainted, so that it became the basis of all his subsequent studies and publications. In 1819 appeared his "Letters to Henry Hallam, Esq.

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from the North of Italy," 2 vols.; and in the same year a free translation of the "Animali Parlanti" of Casti, with lively introductory addresses at each Canto to his several friends, Ugo Foscolo, Hookham Frere, Walter Scott, &c. In 1823 he published a condensed translation, or rather an abstract, in prose and verse, of Boiardo's "Orlando Innamorato," and in the same year began his new version of "Orlando Furioso," which was not completed till 1831, being published in separate volumes at such intervals as his health would allow. The necessity of occasional publication somewhat impaired the popularity and sale of the work; which, for fidelity and taste, is now universally applauded, entirely superseding the previous and inaccurate versions of Hoole and Harrington. This extensive undertaking engaged his time and study during almost the remainder of his life; diversified only by occasional "Reviews" and publications on light or temporary subjects.

Mr. Rose's originality of character, and peculiar gifts of mind, were perhaps displayed even to more advantage in his conversation than in his writings; his refined and classical humour assimilating in style and spirit to that of Canning, Frere, and other scholars with whom he had lived in long and great intimacy. His health suffered in the middle period of life from attacks of paralysis, which, though they withdrew him gradually from London society, did not in the least impair his mental faculties, which continued to afford never-failing occupation to himself and the highest intellectual enjoyment to all about him. He had fixed his residence at Brighton, living there in hospitable and learned retirement, with his wife Marcella (of the ancient Venetian family of Condulmer), and visited chiefly by his London friends. In his leisure hours he composed, and in 1837, privately printed, a little volume of "Rhymes," containing Epistles to his friends, Tales, Sonnets, &c., remarkably characteristic, both of his literary taste and personal feelings; indeed his

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private letters were generally written in easy verse, and partook much of Horatian gaiety and humour. Mr. Rose was a model of all high and honourable feelings, and in every event and situation of life, whether of sorrow or sickness, joy or pleasure, the thoughtful politeness of a perfect gentleman never forsook him: to these gifts he added a religious dependence which afforded support and hope to him through many depressing hours of illness and infirmity. He died on the 30th of April, 1843, in his 68th year, so weakened that he passed to a future world not only without suffering, but by the most easy transition.

CHARLES TOWNSEND.

March 27th, 1858.

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The portrait of Ariosto prefixed to the present volume is engraved from an extraordinarily fine picture, formerly in the Manfrini Palace, now in the possession of a distinguished amateur in London.

We have no space here to give its history, but there is good evidence that it is the original picture painted by Titian, while he was at Ferrara, and on terms of intimacy with the poet.

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INTRODUCTION.

It will, probably, be expected that a new translation of the Furioso should be prefaced by some account of the versions which have preceded it; and I the more readily undertake this little task, as in the execution of it my reasons will be found for the enterprize upon which I have myself adventured.

The first version of Ariosto's great poem was made by Sir John Harrington, the godson of Queen Elizabeth, who translated it into the same stanza as that of the original. The main defect of this work is its infidelity; and I cannot better illustrate this than by observing, that he has compressed a canto of nearly two hundred stanzas into ninety. A more unpardonable defect is, that he always omits what is best worth preserving; and, as an Italian friend once observed to me, it is the poetry of Ariosto which he sacrifices. Another defect of this translator is that of exaggerating the extravagances of his author, and often spreading a ray of humour into a broad glare of buffoonery.

The history of his work may explain these faults, and more especially the last; as we are told he began his labours with the story of Giocondo, without the intention of pursuing them further; when his royal mistress imposed upon him the entire version of the Furioso as a sort of covering for the indecent episode which he had chosen to give as a specimen of the Italian.

If, however, Harrington cannot pretend to much merit as a translator, he has some claims to consideration as a writer, and his work has fallen into more obscurity than the antiquated language in which he writes, will serve to explain. His idioms, his grammar, and his construction (though things with difficulty kept free from foreign modes of speech in a translation) are exclusively English. His narrative is light and lively, and, in perusing it, the reader always feels as if he is swimming with the stream.

The gleam of Italian sunshine, during which he wrote, though it produced beneficial effects upon our literature, was of short duration.

"At one stride came the dark."[1]

The study of Italian letters was dropped at once, and I believe that no traces of literary intercourse between Italy and England are to be found during the succeeding age.

[1] Coleridge's Ancient Mariner.

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In the reign of George II., however, we have a proof of renewed intercourse in the publication of a new translation of the Furioso, dedicated to that monarch, as Harrington's version had been to Queen Elizabeth. This work was produced by William Huggins, Esq., of Headly Park, near Farnham, in Surrey. He was, I am told, reckoned in his day a very learned man, was passionately devoted to music, said to be a great proficient in it, and to have been the person who figures in Hogarth's picture, as the Enraged Musician.

But, whatever other accomplishments he may have possessed, he had certainly no feeling of poetry, and seems to have taken it up as Vernon did rebellion; "because it lay in his way." At least I know no better reason for his translation of Ariosto than his having made a journey to Italy.

The title-page of his book (in two vols. quarto), bears the date of 1757, and was printed for Rivington in Paternoster Row, and John Cook, a bookseller of Farnham, whose shop I remember frequenting in the days of my boyhood. It is printed with the English and Italian confronted, executed in the same stanza as Harrington's version, and translated line for line. Though there are to be found in it some very strange mistakes of Ariosto's meaning, it is, generally speaking, faithful, and as such, has, *primâ facie*, strong claims upon attention. But a species of fidelity is hardly to be coveted, which, at the best, does not accomplish the only end which should be proposed by it. For the translator often departs from the sense of the author, while he echoes his very words. Take an instance. Ariosto has this line—

'Dove presso à Bordea mette Caronna;'

"where the Garonne disembogues itself near Bordeaux:" which Huggins has rendered,

Where to Bordea runs Caronna near.

The thing, perhaps, most worthy of remark in his book, is a passage of the Preface, which throws a curious light upon the state of Italian literature in England at the period of its publication. "It may not be improper (says the author) to observe, that after this work was pretty far advanced, I was informed there had been a translation published in the reign of Elizabeth, and dedicated to that queen. Whereupon I requested a friend to obtain a sight of that book; for it is (it seems) very scarce, *and the glorious original much more so in this country.*"

A few years produced a singular revolution in this respect. Several editions of Ariosto have since that period been published in England; and Hoole's version, the next which succeeded that of Huggins, has, I believe, gone through nearly twenty editions.

This last circumstance may, however, be cited, rather as a

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proof of the new passion entertained for Italian literature, than as an illustration of the progress which had been made in it: for never was a worse or more faithless translation executed than that of Hoole. Every grace, every shade, every gradation of colouring which distinguishes Ariosto, is lost in it. Thus, where the Italian poet, in imitation of Homer, wishing to diversify a scene of slaughter, by giving something of character or of locality to his victims, tells us that Rodomont wounded Lewis the Provencal, *Luigi il provenzal*, Hoole has absurdly translated the passage '*Provincial Lewis!*' thus awakening a most ridiculous train of ideas, and suggesting the notion of some unfortunate provincial who had the misfortune to have his brains knocked out on his visit to the metropolis. Nor are they only tints and shades which are sacrificed in this miserable copy; for the sense of the author, where most obvious, is frequently misinterpreted; and in one couplet the translator has actually mistaken *north* for south, and *sun* for wind; the one specified, and the other obviously implied. The words of the original are,

> 'Ver ponente io andava lungo la sabbia,
> Che del *settentrion* sente la rabbia.'
>
> Canto VI. stanza xxxiv.

Which passage is thus rendered by him:

> Against the west along those sands we came,
> Which feel the *southern heat of Phœbus' flame.*[1]

In addition, however, to the mistakes of Hoole, and what I must call the meanness and monotony of his poetry, I am inclined to consider the metre which he has chosen, as one among the many causes of his failure: this is our heroic couplet, which appears to me to be the measure most opposite to that of Ariosto which could possibly have been selected. Nothing but a stanza can reflect the original; for it is to be observed, that the poet usually closes the idea with it, and that the end of most of them is marked by something epigrammatic either in sense or sound, which would be out of its place except in the concluding couplet. Each canto, or collection of stanzas, then, may be compared to a gallery of cabinet pictures, all perhaps striking or beautiful, but frequently executed on different principles, each of which is often only in harmony with itself. Whoever, therefore, unites any of these little paintings, yet more, he who runs them into one piece, will necessarily either present a picture full of cross lights, and every species of inconsistency, or will only

[1] Thus translated obscurely, but more accurately, by Huggins:
> Towards the west I came along that strand
> Which does the powerful northern blast command.

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avoid this by leaving out whatever is most characteristic in the original, and by making a smear without light, shade, or distinction of outline.

Entertaining this opinion, I have chosen the stanza in preference to the couplet; and because I would imitate Ariosto as closely as the nature of our language will allow, have, like Harrington and Huggins, chosen his own *ottava rima* as the most preferable form of it. Like Mr. Huggins, I have also translated stanza for stanza, but have not, however, imitated that gentleman and some German translators by imposing on myself severer restrictions than appeared to me to be necessary; as in rendering him uniformly line for line; the less so because there is little analogy between the construction of the two languages, and what is easy in the Italian (I need not say that ease is one characteristic of Ariosto) might often appear harsh and inverted in English. It is for this reason that I have not fettered myself by the rule I have mentioned, wherever I conceived any bad effect would result from the adherence to it; but I have, on the other hand, observed it where I thought such a compliance was not objectionable; because I would, wherever it was practicable, tread in the very footsteps of the Italian poet.

My reasons for so religious, some may think so superstitious, an observance of my author's text, have, at least, not been hastily adopted. A long consideration of the means through which he wrought, has convinced me that many strong or beautiful effects produced by him, result out of an accumulation of circumstances, which, though they may appear of little value taken separately, are to be esteemed important as conducing, each in its place, to the main object of the poet. In this particularity he bears a striking resemblance to Defoe. The Furioso, moreover, often pleases as a whole, where it offends in parts, and, notwithstanding many defects, is perhaps the poetical work which is oftenest re-perused with pleasure. Among the many things which have probably contributed to this, may be remarked Ariosto's frequent sacrifice of force to truth; which (to take a short instance) I should say was illustrated by Pinabel's narration of the loss of his lady, in the second canto, where some may be inclined to think that the poet overtalks himself, and many might wish to see the infusion of a spirit, which would perhaps be out of harmony with the circumstances. He is often also studious of what the artists call a repose, and upon which a translator should be most cautious never to intrude. These are some of the reasons why I have followed my leader so warily, and have never intentionally deviated from the print of his steps.

I am, however, well aware that a very weighty objection may be made to a translation so close as that which I present to the

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reader. It may be said that a simplicity of diction, which is pleasing in the Italian, is only to be endured in a less perfect language, when seasoned by the addition of some grace, congenial with the spirit of that into which it is transfused: and hence that to translate the Furioso faithfully into English, would be, to borrow a metaphor used somewhere by Alfieri, to transfer an air from the harp to the hurdy-gurdy.

There is, undoubtedly, great force in this reasoning and illustration. To this, however, I will oppose, in the way of question, *another* illustration which is drawn from a sister art. Would a real lover of Raphael prefer a copy of one of his pictures, which, though well painted, did not convey a true idea of his colouring, or a print of it carefully executed, which gave, at least, a faithful idea of the design? To those who would choose the engraving I offer the following translation.

That it *is* diligently executed, I may venture to assert; for, mistrusting a hasty mode of reading and a facility of composition, I have sought to guard against the faults incidental to these habits, by frequent and attentive correction. I have with this view, submitted every sheet of my present translation to judicious English and Italian friends; have carefully, if not impartially, weighed their objections, and revised my translation more than once by a close comparison with the original.

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ORLANDO FURIOSO.

CANTO I.

ARGUMENT.

Angelica, whom pressing danger frights,
Flies in disorder through the greenwood shade.
Rinaldo's horse escapes: he, following, fights
Ferrau, the Spaniard, in a forest glade.
A second oath the haughty paynim plights,
And keeps it better than the first he made.
King Sacripant regains his long-lost treasure;
But good Rinaldo mars his promised pleasure.

I.

Of LOVES and LADIES, KNIGHTS and ARMS, I sing,
Of COURTESIES, and many a DARING FEAT;
And from those ancient days my story bring,
When Moors from Afric passed in hostile fleet,
And ravaged France, with Agramant their king,
Flushed with his youthful rage and furious heat;
Who on king Charles', the Roman emperor's, head
Had vowed due vengeance for Troyano dead.

II.

In the same strain of Roland [1] will I tell
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme,
On whom strange madness and rank fury fell,
A man esteemed so wise in former time;
If she, who to like cruel pass has well
Nigh brought my feeble wit which fain would climb
And hourly wastes my sense, concede me skill
And strength my daring promise to fulfil.

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III.

Good seed of Hercules,[2] give ear and deign,
Thou that this age's grace and splendour art,
Hippolitus, to smile upon his pain
Who tenders what he has with humble heart.
For though all hope to quit the score were vain,
My pen and page may pay the debt in part;
Then, with no jealous eye my offering scan,
Nor scorn my gift who give thee all I can.

IV.

And me, amid the worthiest shalt thou hear,
Whom I with fitting praise prepare to grace,
Record the good Rogero[3], valiant peer,
The ancient root of thine illustrious race.
Of him, if thou wilt lend a willing ear,
The worth and warlike feats I shall retrace;
So thou thy graver cares some little time
Postponing, lend thy leisure to my rhyme.

V.

Roland, who long the lady of Catay,[4]
Angelica, had loved, and with his brand
Raised countless trophies to that damsel gay,
In India, Median, and Tartarian land,
Westward with her had measured back his way;
Where, nigh the Pyrenees, with many a band
Of Germany and France, King Charlemagne
Had camped his faithful host upon the plain.

VI.

To make king Agramant, for penance, smite
His cheek, and rash Marsilius rue the hour;
This, when all trained with lance and sword to fight,
He led from Africa to swell his power;
That other when he pushed, in fell despite,
Against the realm of France Spain's martial flower.
'Twas thus Orlando came where Charles was tented
In evil hour, and soon the deed repented.

VII.

For here was seized his dame of peerless charms,
(How often human judgment wanders wide)!
Whom in long warfare he had kept from harms,
From western climes to eastern shores her guide
In his own land, 'mid friends and kindred arms,
Now without contest severed from his side.
Fearing the mischief kindled by her eyes,
From him the prudent emperor reft the prize.

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VIII.

For bold Orlando and his cousin,[5] free
Rinaldo late contended for the maid,
Enamoured of that beauty rare; since she
Alike the glowing breast of either swayed.
But Charles, who little liked such rivalry,
And drew an omen thence of feebler aid,
To abate the cause of quarrel, seized the fair,
And placed her in Bavarian Namus' care.

IX.

Vowing with her the warrior to content,
Who in that conflict, on that fatal day,
With his good hand most gainful succour lent,
And slew most paynims in the martial fray.
But counter to his hopes the battle went,
And his thinned squadrons fled in disarray;
Namus, with other christian captains taken,
And his pavilion in the rout forsaken.

X.

There, lodged by Charles, that gentle bonnibel,
Ordained to be the valiant victor's meed,
Before the event had sprung into her sell,
And from the combat turned in time of need;
Presaging wisely Fortune would rebel
That fatal day against the Christian creed:
And, entering a thick wood, discovered near,
In a close path, a horseless cavalier,

XI.

With shield upon his arm, in knightly wise,
Belted and mailed, his helmet on his head;
The knight more lightly through the forest hies
Than half-clothed churl to win the cloth of red.[6]
But not from cruel snake more swiftly flies[7]
The timid shepherdess, with startled tread,
Than poor Angelica the bridle turns
When she the approaching knight on foot discerns.

XII.

This was that Paladin, good Aymon's seed,
Who Mount Albano had in his command;
And late Bayardo lost, his gallant steed,
Escaped by strange adventure from his hand.
As soon as seen, the maid who rode at speed
The warrior knew, and, while yet distant, scanned
The angelic features and the gentle air
Which long had held him fast in Cupid's snare.

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XIII.

The affrighted damsel turns her palfrey round,
And shakes the floating bridle in the wind;
Nor in her panic seeks to choose her ground,
Nor open grove prefers to thicket blind.
But reckless, pale and trembling, and astound,
Leaves to her horse the devious way to find.
He up and down the forest bore the dame,
Till to a sylvan river's bank he came.

XIV.

Here stood the fierce Ferrau[s] in grisly plight,
Begrimed with dust, and bathed with sweat and blood;
Who lately had withdrawn him from the fight,
To rest and drink at that refreshing flood:
But there had tarried in his own despite,
Since bending from the bank, in hasty mood,
He dropped his helmet in the crystal tide,
And vainly to regain the treasure tried.

XV.

Thither at speed she drives, and evermore
In her wild panic utters fearful cries;
And at the voice, upleaping on the shore,
The Saracen her lovely visage spies.
And, pale as is her cheek, and troubled sore,
Arriving, quickly to the warrior's eyes
(Though many days no news of her had shown)
The beautiful Angelica is known.

XVI.

Courteous, and haply gifted with a breast,
As warm as either of the cousins two;*
As bold, as if his brows in steel were dressed,
The succour which she sought he lent, and drew
His faulchion, and against Rinaldo pressed,
Who saw with little fear the champion true.
Not only each to each was known by sight,
But each had proved in arms his foeman's might.

XVII.

Thus, as they are, on foot the warriors vie
In cruel strife, and blade to blade oppose;
No marvel plate or brittle mail should fly,
When anvils had not stood the deafening blows.
It now behoves the palfrey swift to ply
His feet; for while the knights in combat close,
Him vexed to utmost speed, with goading spurs,
By waste or wood the frighted damsel stirs.

* Orlando and Rinaldo.

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XVIII.

After the two had struggled long to throw
Each other in the strife, and vainly still;
Since neither valiant warrior was below
His opposite in force and knightly skill:
The first to parley with his Spanish foe
Was the good master of Albano's hill
(As one within whose raging breast was pent
A reckless fire which struggled for a vent).

XIX.

"Thou think'st," he said, "to injure me alone,
"But know thou wilt thyself as much molest:
"For if we fight because yon rising sun
"This raging heat has kindled in thy breast,
"What were thy gain, and what the guerdon won,
"Though I should yield my life, or stoop my crest;
"If she shall never be thy glorious meed,
"Who flies, while vainly we in battle bleed?

XX.

"Then how much better, since our stake's the same,
"Thou, loving like myself, should'st mount and stay
"To wait this battle's end, the lovely dame,
"Before she fly yet further on her way.
"The lady taken, we repeat our claim
"With naked faulchion to that peerless prey:
"Else by long toil I see not what we gain
"But simple loss and unrequited pain."

XXI.

The peer's proposal pleased the paynim well.
And so their hot contention was foregone;
And such fair truce replaced that discord fell,
So mutual wrongs forgot and mischief done;
That for departure seated in his sell,
On foot the Spaniard left not Aymon's son;
But him to mount his courser's crupper prayed;
And both united chased the royal maid.

XXII.

Oh! goodly truth in cavaliers of old!
Rivals they were, to different faith were bred.
Not yet the weary warriors' wounds were cold—
Still smarting from those strokes so fell and dread.
Yet they together ride by waste and wold,
And, unsuspecting, devious dingle thread.
Them, while four spurs infest his foaming sides,
Their courser brings to where the way divides.

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XXIII.

And now the warlike pair at fault, for they
Knew not by which she might her palfrey goad,
(Since both, without distinction, there survey
The recent print of hoofs on either road),
Commit the chase to fortune. By this way
The paynim pricked, by that Rinaldo strode.
But fierce Ferrau, bewildered in the wood,
Found himself once again where late he stood.

XXIV.

Beside the water, where he stoop'd to drink,
And dropt the knightly helmet,—to his cost,
Sunk in the stream; and since he could not think
Her to retrieve, who late his hopes had crossed,
He, where the treasure fell, descends the brink
Of that swift stream, and seeks the morion lost.
But the casque lies so bedded in the sands,
'Twill ask no light endeavour at his hands.

XXV.

A bough he severs from a neighbouring tree,
And shreds and shapes the branch into a pole:
With this he sounds the stream, and anxiously
Fathoms, and rakes, and ransacks shelf and hole.
While angered sore at heart, and restless, he
So lingered, where the troubled waters roll,
Breast-high, from the mid river rose upright,
The apparition of an angry knight.

XXVI.

Armed at all points he was, except his head,
And in his better hand a helmet bore;
The very casque, which in the river's bed
Ferrau sought vainly, toiling long and sore.
Upon the Spanish knight he frowned, and said:
"Thou traitor to thy word, thou perjured Moor,
"Why grieve the goodly helmet to resign,
"Which, due to me long since, is justly mine?

XXVII.

"Remember, pagan, when thine arm laid low
"The brother of Angelica.' That knight
"Am I;—thy word was plighted then to throw
"After my other arms this helmet bright.
"If Fortune now compel thee to forego
"The prize, and do my will in thy despite,
"Grieve not at this, but rather grieve that thou
"Art found a perjured traitor to thy vow.

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XXVIII.

"But if thou seek'st a helmet, be thy task
"To win and wear it more to thy renown.
"A noble prize were good Orlando's casque;
"Rinaldo's such, or yet a fairer crown;
"Almontes', or Mambrino's iron masque:
"Make one of these, by force of arms, thine own.
"And this good helm will fitly be bestowed
"Where (such thy promise) it has long been owed."

XXIX.

Bristled the paynim's every hair at view
Of that grim shade, uprising from the tide,
And vanished was his fresh and healthful hue,
While on his lips the half-formed accents died.
Next hearing Argalìa, whom he slew,
(So was the warrior hight) that stream beside,
Thus his unknightly breach of promise blame,
He burned all over, flushed with rage and shame.

XXX.

Nor having time his falsehood to excuse,
And knowing well how true the phantom's lore,
Stood speechless; such remorse the words infuse.
Then by Lanfusa's life the warrior swore,
Never in fight, or foray would he use
Helmet but that which good Orlando bore
From Aspramont, where bold Almontes [o] paid
His life a forfeit to the christian blade.

XXXI.

And this new vow discharged more faithfully
Than the vain promise which was whilom plight;
And from the stream departing heavily,
Was many days sore vexed and grieved in sprite;
And still intent to seek Orlando, he
Roved wheresoe'er he hoped to find the knight.
A different lot befel Rinaldo; who
Had chanced another pathway to pursue.

XXXII.

For far the warrior fared not, ere he spied,
Bounding across the path, his gallant steed,
And, "stay, Bayardo mine," Rinaldo cried,
"Too cruel care the loss of thee does breed."
The horse for this returned not to his side,
Deaf to his prayer, but flew with better speed.
Furious, in chase of him, Rinaldo hies.
But follow we Angelica, who flies.

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XXXIII.

Through dreary woods and dark the damsel fled,
By rude unharboured heath and savage height,
While every leaf or spray that rustled, bred
(Of oak, or elm, or beech) such new affright,
She here and there her foaming palfrey sped
By strange and crooked paths with furious flight;
And at each shadow, seen in valley blind,
Or mountain, feared Rinaldo was behind.

XXXIV.

As a young roe or fawn of fallow deer,
Who, mid the shelter of its native glade,
Has seen a hungry pard or tiger tear
The bosom of its bleeding dam, dismayed,
Bounds, through the forest green in ceaseless fear
Of the destroying beast, from shade to shade,
And at each sapling touched, amid its pangs,
Believes itself between the monster's fangs,

XXXV.

One day and night, and half the following day,
The damsel wanders wide, nor whither knows;
Then enters a deep wood, whose branches play,
Moved lightly by the freshening breeze which blows.
Through this two clear and murmuring rivers stray:
Upon their banks a fresher herbage grows;
While the twin streams their passage slowly clear,
Make music with the stones, and please the ear.

XXXVI.

Weening removed the way by which she wends,
A thousand miles from loathed Rinaldo's beat,
To rest herself a while the maid intends,
Wearied with that long flight and summer's heat.
She from her saddle 'mid spring flowers descends
And takes the bridle from her courser fleet;
And loose along the river lets him pass,
Roving the banks in search of lusty grass.

XXXVII.

Behold! at hand a thicket she surveys
Gay with the flowering thorn and vermeil rose:
The tuft reflected in the stream which strays
Beside it, overshadowing oaks enclose.
Hollow within, and safe from vulgar gaze,
It seemed a place constructed for repose;
With bows so interwoven, that the light
Pierced not the tangled screen, far less the sight.

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XXXVIII.

Within soft moss and herbage form a bed;
And to delay and rest the traveller woo.
'Twas there her limbs the weary damsel spread,
Her eye-balls bathed in slumber's balmy dew
But little time had eased her drooping head,
Ere, as she weened, a courser's tramp she knew.
Softly she rises, and the river near,
Armed cap-à-piè, beholds a cavalier.

XXXIX.

If friend or foe, she nothing comprehends,
(So hope and fear her doubting bosom tear)
And that adventure's issue mute attends,
Nor even with a sigh disturbs the air.
The cavalier upon the bank descends;
And sits so motionless, so lost in care,
(His visage propt upon his arm) to sight
Changed into senseless stone appeared the knight.

XL.

Pensive, above an hour, with drooping head,
He rested mute, ere he began his moan;
And then his piteous tale of sorrow said,
Lamenting in so soft and sweet a tone,
He in a tiger's breast had pity bred,
Or with his mournful wailings rent a stone.
And so he sighed and wept; like rivers flowed
His tears, his bosom like an Ætna glowed.

XLI.

"Thought which now makes me burn, now freeze with hate,
"Which gnaws my heart and rankles at its root!
"What's left to me," he said, "arrived too late,
"While one more favoured bears away the fruit?
"Bare words and looks scarce cheered my hopeless state,
"And the prime spoils reward another's suit.
"Then since for me nor fruit nor blossom hangs,
"Why should I longer pine in hopeless pangs?

XLII.

"The virgin has her image in the rose[11]
"Sheltered in garden on its native stock,
"Which there in solitude and safe repose,
"Blooms unapproached by shepherd or by flock.
"For this earth teems, and freshening water flows,
"And breeze and dewy dawn their sweets unlock:
"With such the wishful youth his bosom dresses,
"With such the enamoured damsel braids her tresses.

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XLIII.

" But wanton hands no sooner this displace
" From the maternal stem, where it was grown,
" Than all is withered; whatsoever grace
" It found with man or heaven; bloom, beauty, gone.
" The damsel who should hold in higher place
" Than light or life the flower which is her own,
" Suffering the spoiler's hand to crop the prize,
" Forfeits her worth in every other's eyes.

XLIV.

" And be she cheap with all except the wight
" On whom she did so large a boon bestow.
" Ah! false and cruel Fortune! foul despite!
" While others triumph, I am drown'd in woe.
" And can it be that I such treasure slight?
" And can I then my very life forego?
" No! let me die; 'twere happiness above
" A longer life, if I must cease to love."

XLV.

If any ask who made this sorrowing,
And pour'd into the stream so many tears,
I answer, it was fair Circassia's king,[12]
That Sacripant, oppressed with amorous cares.
Love is the source from which his troubles spring,
The sole occasion of his pains and fears;
And he to her a lover's service paid,
Now well remembered by the royal maid.

XLVI.

He for her sake from Orient's farthest reign
Roved thither, where the sun descends to rest;
For he was told in India, to his pain,
That she Orlando followed to the west.
He after learned in France that Charlemagne
Secluded from that champion and the rest,
As a fit guerdon, mewed her for the knight
Who should protect the lilies best in fight.

XLVII.

The warrior in the field had been, and viewed,
Short time before, king Charlemagne's disgrace;
And vainly had Angelica pursued,
Nor of the damsel's footsteps found a trace.
And this is what the weeping monarch rued,
And this he so bewailed in doleful case:
Hence, into words his lamentations run,
Which might for pity stop the passing sun.

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XLVIII.

While Sacripant laments him in this plight,
And makes a tepid fountain of his eyes;
And, what I deem not needful to recite,
Pours forth yet other plaints and piteous cries;
Propitious Fortune wills his lady bright
Should hear the youth lament him in such wise:
And thus a moment compassed what, without
Such chance, long ages had not brought about.

XLIX.

With deep attention, while the warrior weeps,
She marks the fashion of the grief and tears
And words of him, whose passion never sleeps;
Nor this the first confession which she hears.
But with his plaint her heart no measure keeps,
Cold as the column which the builder rears.
Like haughty maid, who holds herself above
The world, and deems none worthy of her love.

L.

But her from harm amid those woods to keep,
The damsel weened she might his guidance need;
For the poor drowning caitiff, who, chin-deep,
Implores not help, is obstinate indeed.
Nor will she, if she let the occasion sleep,
Find escort that will stand her in such stead:
For she that king by long experience knew
Above all other lovers, kind and true.

LI.

But not the more for this the maid intends
To heal the mischief which her charms had wrought.
And for past ills to furnish glad amends
In that full bliss by pining lover sought.
To keep the king in play are all her ends,
His help by some device or fiction bought,
And having to her purpose taxed his daring,
To reassume as wont her haughty bearing.

LII.

An apparition bright and unforeseen,
She stood like Venus or Diana fair,
In solemn pageant, issuing on the scene
From out of shadowy wood or murky lair.
And "Peace be with you," cried the youthful queen,
"And God preserve my honour in his care,
"Nor suffer that you blindly entertain
"Opinion of my fame so false and vain!"

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LIII.

Not with such wonderment a mother eyes,
With such excessive bliss the son she mourned
As dead, lamented still with tears and sighs,
Since the thinned files without her boy returned.
—Not such her rapture as the king's surprise
And ecstasy of joy when he discerned
The lofty presence, cheeks of heavenly hue,
And lovely form which broke upon his view.

LIV.

He, full of fond and eager passion, pressed
Towards his Lady, his Divinity;
And she now clasped the warrior to her breast,
Who in Catày had haply been less free.
And now again the maid her thoughts addressed
Towards her native land and empery:
And feels, with hope revived, her bosom beat
Shortly to repossess her sumptuous seat.

LV.

Her chances all to him the damsel said,
Since he was eastward sent to Sericane
By her to seek the martial monarch's aid,
Who swayed the sceptre of that fair domain;
And told how oft Orlando's friendly blade
Had saved her from dishonour, death, and pain;
And how she so preserved her virgin flower
Pure as it blossomed in her natal hour.

LVI.

Haply the tale was true; yet will not seem
Likely to one of sober sense possessed:
But Sacripant, who waked from worser dream,
In all without a cavil acquiesced:
Since Love, who sees without one guiding gleam,
Spies in broad day but that which likes him best:
For one sign of the afflicted man's disease
Is to give ready faith to things which please.

LVII.

"If good Anglante's lord the prize forbore,
"Nor seized the fair occasion when he might,
"The loss be his, if Fortune never more
"Him to enjoy so fair a prize invite.
"To imitate that lord of little lore
"I think not," said, apart, Circassia's knight,
"To quit such proffered good, and, to my shame,
"Have but myself on after-thought to blame.

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LVIII.

"No! I will pluck the fresh and morning rose,
"Which, should I tarry, may be overblown.
"To woman, (this my own experience shows,)
"No deed more sweet or welcome can be done.
"Then, whatsoever scorn the damsel shows,
"Though she awhile may weep and make her moan,
"I will, unchecked by anger, false or true,
"Or sharp repulse, my bold design pursue."

LIX.

This said, he for the soft assault prepares,
When a loud noise within the greenwood shade
Beside him, rang in his astounded ears,
And sore against his will the monarch stayed.
He donned his helm (his other arms he wears),
Aye wont to rove in steel, with belted blade,
Replaced the bridle on his courser fleet,
Grappled his lance, and sprang into his seat.

LX.

With the bold semblance of a valiant knight,
Behold a warrior threads the forest hoar.
The stranger's mantle was of snowy white,
And white alike the waving plume he wore.
Balked of his bliss, and full of fell despite,
The monarch ill the interruption bore,
And spurred his horse to meet him in mid space,
With hate and fury glowing in his face.

LXI.

Him he defies to fight, approaching nigh,
And weens to make him stoop his haughty crest:
The other knight, whose worth I rate as high,
His warlike prowess puts to present test;
Cuts short his haughty threats and angry cry,
And spurs, and lays his levelled lance in rest.
In tempest wheels Circassia's valiant peer,
And at his foeman's head each aims his spear.

LXII.

Not brindled bulls or tawny lions spring
To forest warfare with such deadly will
As those two knights, the stranger and the king.
Their spears alike the opposing bucklers thrill:
The solid ground, at their encountering,
Trembles from fruitful vale to naked hill:
And well it was the mail in which they dressed
Their bodies was of proof, and saved the breast.

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LXIII.

Nor swerved the chargers from their destined course;
Who met like rams, and butted head to head.
The warlike Saracen's ill-fated horse,
Well valued while alive, dropt short and dead:
The stranger's, too, fell senseless; but perforce
Was roused by rowel from his grassy bed.
That of the paynim king, extended straight,
Lay on his battered lord with all his weight.

LXIV.

Upright upon his steed, the knight unknown,
Who at the encounter horse and rider threw,
Deeming enough was in the conflict done,
Cares not the worthless warfare to renew;
But endlong by the readiest path is gone,
And measures, pricking frith and forest through,
A mile, or little less, in furious heat,
Ere the foiled Saracen regains his feet.

LXV.

As the bewildered and astonished clown
Who held the plough (the thunder storm o'erpast)
There, where the deafening bolt had beat him down,
Nigh his death-stricken cattle, wakes aghast,
And sees the distant pine without its crown,[13]
Which he saw clad in leafy honours last;
So rose the paynim knight with troubled face,
The maid spectatress of the cruel case.

LXVI.

He sighs and groans, yet not for mischief sore
Endured in wounded arm or foot which bled;
But for mere shame, and never such before
Or after, dyed his cheek so deep a red,
And if he rued his fall, it grieved him more
His dame should lift him from his courser dead.
He speechless had remained, I ween, if she
Had not his prisoned tongue and voice set free.

LXVII.

"Grieve not," she said, "sir monarch, for thy fall;
"But let the blame upon thy courser be!
"To whom more welcome had been forage, stall,
"And rest, than further joust and jeopardy;
"And well thy foe the loser may I call,
"(Who shall no glory gain) for such is he
"Who is the first to quit his ground, if aught
"Angelica of fighting fields be taught."

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LXVIII.

While she so seeks the Saracen to cheer,
Behold a messenger with pouch and horn,
On panting hackney!—man and horse appear
With the long journey, weary and forlorn.
He questions Sacripant, approaching near,
Had he seen warrior pass, by whom were borne
A shield and crest of white; in search of whom
Through the wide forest pricked the weary groom.

LXIX.

King Sacripant made answer, "As you see,
"He threw me here, and went but now his way:
"Then tell the warrior's name, that I may be
"Informed whose valour foiled me in the fray."
To him the groom,—"That which you ask of me
"I shall relate to you without delay:
"Know that you were in combat prostrate laid
"By the tried valour of a gentle maid.

LXX.

"Bold is the maid; but fairer yet than bold,
"Nor the redoubted virgin's name I veil:
"'Twas Bradamant[14] who marred what praise of old
"Your prowess ever won with sword and mail."
This said, he spurred again, his story told,
And left him little gladdened by the tale.
He recks not what he says or does, for shame,
And his flushed visage kindles into flame.

LXXI.

After the woeful warrior long had thought
Upon his cruel case, and still in vain,
And found a woman his defeat had wrought,
For thinking but increased the monarch's pain,
He climbed the other horse, nor spake he aught;
But silently uplifted from the plain,
Upon the croup bestowed that damsel sweet,
Reserved to gladder use in safer seat.

LXXII.

Two miles they had not rode before they hear
The sweeping woods which spread about them, sound
With such loud crash and trample, far and near,
The forest seemed to tremble all around;
And shortly after see a steed appear,
With housings wrought in gold and richly bound;
Who clears the bush and stream, with furious force
And whatsoever else impedes his course.

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LXXIII.

'Unless the misty air," the damsel cries,
"And boughs deceive my sight, yon noble steed
"Is, sure, Bayardo,[15] who before us flies,
"And parts the wood with such impetuous speed.
"—Yes, 'tis Bayardo's self I recognize.
"How well the courser understands our need!
"Two riders ill a foundered jade would bear,
"But hither speeds the horse to end that care."

LXXIV.

The bold Circassian lighted, and applied
His hand to seize him by the flowing rein,
Who, swiftly turning, with his heels replied,
For he like lightning wheeled upon the plain.
Woe to the king! but that he leaps aside,
For should he smite, he would not lash in vain.
Such are his bone and sinew, that the shock
Of his good heels had split a metal rock.

LXXV.

Then to the maid he goes submissively,
With gentle blandishment and humble mood;
As the dog greets his lord with frolic glee,
Whom, some short season past, he had not viewed.
For good Bayardo had in memory
Albracca, where her hands prepared his food,[16]
What time the damsel loved Rinaldo bold;
Rinaldo, then ungrateful, stern, and cold.

LXXVI.

With her left hand she takes him by the bit,
And with the other pats his sides and chest:
While the good steed (so marvellous his wit),
Lamb-like, obeyed the damsel and caressed.
Meantime the king, who sees the moment fit,
Leapt up, and with his knees the courser pressed.
While on the palfrey, eased of half his weight,
The lady left the croup, and gained the seat.

LXXVII.

Then, as at hazard, she directs her sight,
Sounding in arms a man on foot espies,
And glows with sudden anger and despite;
For she in him the son of Aymon eyes.
Her more than life esteems the youthful knight,
While she from him, like crane from falcon, flies.
Time was the lady sighed, her passion slighted;
'Tis now Rinaldo loves, as ill requited.

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LXXVIII.

And this effect two different fountains wrought,
Whose wonderous waters different moods inspire.
Both spring in Arden, with rare virtue fraught:
This fills the heart with amorous desire:
Who taste that other fountain are untaught
Their love, and change for ice their former fire.
Rinaldo drank the first, and vainly sighs;
Angelica the last, and hates and flies.

LXXIX.

Mixed with such secret bane the waters glide,
Which amorous care convert to sudden hate;
The maid no sooner had Rinaldo spied,
Than on her laughing eyes deep darkness sate:
And with sad mien and trembling voice she cried
To Sacripant, and prayed him not to wait
The near approach of the detested knight,
But through the wood with her pursue his flight.

LXXX.

To her the Saracen, with anger hot:
"Is knightly worship sunk so low in me,
"That thou should'st hold my valour cheap, and not
"Sufficient to make yonder champion flee?
"Already are Albracca's fights forgot,
"And that dread night I singly stood for thee?
"That night when I, though naked, was thy shield
"Against King Agrican and all his field?"

LXXXI.

She answers not, and knows not in her fear
What 'tis she does; Rinaldo is too nigh:
And from afar that furious cavalier
Threats the bold Saracen with angry cry,
As soon as the known steed and damsel dear,
Whose charms such flame had kindled, meet his eye.
But what ensued between the haughty pair
I in another canto shall declare.

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CANTO II.

ARGUMENT.

A hermit parts, by means of hollow sprite,
The two redoubted rivals' dangerous play;
Rinaldo goes where Love and Hope invite,
But is dispatched by Charles another way:
Bradamant, seeking her devoted knight,
The good Rogero, nigh becomes the prey
Of Pinabel, who drops the damsel brave
Into the dungeon of a living grave.

I.

Injurious Love, why still to mar accord
Between desires has been thy favourite feat?
Why does it please thee so, perfidious lord,
Two hearts should with a different measure beat?
Thou wilt not let me take the certain ford,
Dragging me where the stream is deep and fleet.
Her I abandon who my love desires,
While she who hates, respect and love inspires.

II.

Thou to Rinaldo show'st the damsel fair,
While he seems hideous to that gentle dame;
And he, who when the lady's pride and care,
Paid back with deepest hate her amorous flame,
Now pines, himself, the victim of despair,
Scorned in his turn, and his reward the same.
By the changed damsel in such sort abhorred,
She would choose death before that hated lord.

III.

He to the Pagan cries: "Forego thy theft,
"And down, false felon, from that pilfer'd steed;
"I am not wont to let my own be reft,
"And he who seeks it dearly pays the deed.
"More—I shall take from thee yon lovely weft;
"To leave thee such a prize were foul misdeed;
"And horse and maid, whose worth outstrips belief,
"Were ill, methinks, relinquished to a thief."

IV.

"Thou liest," the haughty Saracen retorts,
As proud, and burning with as fierce a flame,
"A thief thyself, if Fame the truth reports:[1]
"But let good deeds decide our dubious claim,
"With whom the steed or damsel fair assorts:
"Best proved by valiant deeds: though, for the dame,
"That nothing is so precious, I with thee
"(Search the wide world throughout) may well agree."

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V.

As two fierce dogs will sometimes stand at gaze,
Whom hate or other springs of strife inspire,
And grind their teeth, while each his foe surveys
With sidelong glance and eyes more red than fire.
Then either falls to bites, and hoarsely bays,
While their stiff bristles stand on end with ire:
So from reproach and menace to the sword
Pass Sacripant and Clermont's angry lord.

VI.

Thus kindling into wrath the knights engage:
One is on foot, the other on his horse:
Small gain to this; for inexperienced page
Would better rein his charger in the course.
For such Bayardo's sense, he will not wage
War with his master, or put out his force.
For voice, nor hand, nor manage, will he stir,
Rebellious to the rein or goading spur.

VII.

He, when the king would urge him, takes the rest,
Or, when he curbs him, runs in giddy rings;
And drops his head beneath his spreading chest,
And plays his spine, and runs an-end and flings.
And now the furious Saracen distressed,
Sees 'tis no time to tame the beast, and springs,
With one hand on the pummel, to the ground;
Clear of the restless courser at a bound.

VIII.

As soon as Sacripant, with well-timed leap,
Is from the fury of Bayardo freed,
You may believe the battle does not sleep
Between those champions, matched in heart and deed.
Their sounding blades such changeful measure keep,
The hammer-strokes of Vulcan with less speed
Descend in that dim cavern, where he heats,
And Jove's red thunders on his anvil beats.

IX.

Sometimes they lunge, then feign the thrust and parry:
Deep masters of the desperate game they play;
Or rise upon the furious stroke, and carry
Their swords aloft, or stoop and stand at bay.
Again they close, again exhausted tarry;
Now hide, now show themselves, and now give way,
And where one knight an inch of ground has granted,
His foeman's foot upon that inch is planted.

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X.

When, lo! Rinaldo, now impatient grown,
Strikes full at Sacripant with lifted blade;
And he puts forth his buckler made of bone,
And well with strong and stubborn steel inlaid:
Though passing thick, Fusberta [2] cleaves it: groan
Greenwood, and covert close, and sunny glade.
The paynim's arm rings senseless with the blow,
And steel and bone, like ice, in shivers go.

XI.

When the fair damsel saw, with timid eye,
Such ruin follow from the faulchion's sway,
She, like the criminal, whose doom is nigh,
Changed her fair countenance through sore dismay,
And deemed that little time was left to fly
If she would not be that Rinaldo's prey,
Rinaldo loathed by her as much, as he
Doats on the scornful damsel miserably.

XII.

So turned her horse into the gloomy chase,
And drove him through rough path and tangled ally,
And oftentimes bent back her bloodless face,
And saw Rinaldo from each thicket sally.
Nor flying long had urged the frantic race,
Before she met a hermit in a valley.
Devotion in his aspect was expressed,
And his long beard descended on his breast.

XIII.

Wasted he was as much by fasts as age,
And on an ass was mounted, slow and sure;
His visage warranted that never sage
Had conscience more precise or passing pure.
Though in his arteries time had stilled the rage
Of blood, and spake him feeble and demure,
At sight of the delightful damsel, he
Was inly stirred for very charity.

XIV.

The lady prayed that kindly friar, that he
Would straight conduct her to some haven near,
For that she from the land of France might flee,
And never more of loathed Rinaldo hear.
The hermit, who was skilled in sorcery,
Ceased not to soothe the gentle damsel's fear.
And with the promise of deliverance, shook
His pocket, and drew forth a secret book.

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XV.

This opened, quick and mighty marvel wrought;
For not a leaf is finished by the sage,
Before a spirit, by his bidding brought,
Waits his command in likeness of a page:
He, by the magic writ constrained and taught,
Hastes where the warriors face to face engage,
In the cool shade—but not in cool disport—
And steps between, and stops their battle short.

XVI.

"In courtesy," he cried, "let either show
"What his foe's death to either can avail,
"And what the guerdon conquest will bestow
"On him who in the battle shall prevail,
"If Roland, though he has not struck a blow,
"Or snapt in fight a single link of mail,
"To Paris-town conveys the damsel gay,
"Who has engaged you in this bitter fray.

XVII.

"Within an easy mile I saw the peer
"Pricking to Paris with that lady bright;
"Riding, in merry mood, with laugh and jeer,
"And mocking at your fierce and fruitless fight.
"Sure it were better, while they yet are near,
"To follow peer and damsel in their flight:
"For should he once in Paris place his prize
"The lady never more shall meet your eyes."

XVIII.

You might have seen those angry cavaliers
Change at the demon's tale for rage and shame;
And curse themselves as wanting eyes and ears,
To let their rival cheat them of the dame.
Towards his horse the good Rinaldo steers,
Breathing forth piteous sighs which seem of flame;
And, if he join Orlando—ere they part—
Swears in his fury he will have his heart.

XIX.

So, passing where the prompt Bayardo stood,
Leaps on his back, and leaves, as swift as wind,
Without farewell, his rival in the wood;
Much less invites him to a seat behind.
The goaded charger, in his heat of blood,
Forces whate'er his eager course confined,
Ditch, river, tangled thorn, or marble block;
He swims the river, and he clears the rock.

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XX.

Let it not, sir, sound strangely in your ear
Rinaldo took the steed thus readily,
So long and vainly followed far and near;
For he, endued with reasoning faculty,
Had not in vice lured on the following peer,
But fled before his cherished lord, that he
Might guide him whither went the gentle dame,
For whom, as he had heard, he nursed a flame.

XXI.

For when Angelica, in random dread,
From the pavilion winged her rapid flight,
Bayardo marked the damsel as she fled,
His saddle lightened of Mount Alban's knight;
Who then on foot an equal combat sped,
Matched with a baron of no meaner might;
And chased the maid by woods, and floods, and strands,
In hopes to place her in the warrior's hands.

XXII.

And, with desire to bring him to the maid,
Gallopped before him still with rampant play;
But would not let his master mount, afraid
That he might make him take another way.
So luring on Rinaldo through the shade,
Twice brought him to his unexpected prey;
Twice foiled in his endeavour: once by bold
Ferrau; then Sacripant, as lately told.

XXIII.

Now good Bayardo had believed the tiding
Of that fair damsel, which produced the accord;
And in the devil's cunning tale confiding,
Renewed his wonted service to his lord.
Behold Rinaldo then in fury riding,
And pushing still his courser Paris-ward!
Though he fly fast, the champion's wishes go
Faster; and wind itself had seemed too slow.

XXIV.

At night Rinaldo rests his steed, with pain
To meet Anglante's lord he burned so sore;
And lent such credit to the tidings vain
Of the false courier of that wizard hoar:
And that day and the next, with flowing rein,
Rode, till the royal city rose before
His eyes; where Charlemagne had taken post,
With the sad remnant of his broken host.

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XXV.

He, for he fears the Afric king's pursuit,
And sap and siege, upon his vassals calls
To gather in fresh victual, and recruit
And cleanse their ditches, and repair their walls.
And what may best annoy the foes, and suit
For safety, without more delay forestalls;
And plans an embassy to England, thence
To gather fresher forces for defence.

XXVI.

For he is bent again to try the fate
Of arms in tented field, though lately shamed;
And send Rinaldo to the neighbouring state
Of Britain, which was after England named.
Ill liked the Paladin to cross the strait;
Not that the people or the land he blamed,
But that King Charles was sudden; nor a day
Would grant the valiant envoy for delay.

XXVII.

Rinaldo never executed thing
Less willingly, prevented in his quest
Of that fair visage he was following,
Whose charms his heart had ravished from his breast.
Yet, in obedience to the christian king,
Prepared himself to do the royal hest.
To Calais the good envoy wends with speed,
And the same day embarks himself and steed.

XXVIII.

And there, in scorn of cautious pilot's skill
(Such his impatience to regain his home),
Launched on the doubtful sea, which boded ill,
And rolled its heavy billows, white with foam.
The wind, enraged that he opposed his will,
Stirred up the waves; and, 'mid the gathering gloom,
So the loud storm and tempest's fury grew,
That topmast-high the flashing waters flew.

XXIX.

The watchful mariners, in wary sort,
Haul down the mainsail, and attempt to wear;
And would put back in panic to the port,
Whence, in ill hour, they loosed with little care.
—"Not so," exclaims the wind, and stops them short,
"So poor a penance will not pay the dare."
And when they fain would veer, with fiercer roar
Pelts back their reeling prow and blusters more.

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XXX.

Starboard and larboard beats the fitful gale,
And never for a thought its ire assuages;
While the strained vessel drives with humble sail
Before the billows, as the tempest rages.
But I, who still pursue a varying tale,
Must leave awhile the Paladin, who wages
A weary warfare with the wind and flood;
To follow a fair virgin of his blood.

XXXI.

I speak of that famed damsel, by whose spear
O'erthrown, King Sacripant on earth was flung;
The worthy sister of the valiant peer,
From Beatrix and good Duke Aymon sprung.
By daring deeds and puissance no less dear
To Charlemagne and France: Since proved among
The first, her prowess, tried by many a test,
Equal to good Rinaldo's shone confessed.

XXXII.

A cavalier was suitor to the dame,
Who out of Afric passed with Agramant;
Rogero was his valiant father's name,
His mother was the child of Agolant.
And she, who not of bear or lion came,
Disdained not on the Child her love to plant,
Though cruel Fortune, ill their wishes meeting,
Had granted to the pair a single greeting.

XXXIII.

Alone thenceforth she sought her lover (he
Was named of him to whom he owed his birth),
And roved as safe as if in company
Of thousands, trusting in her single worth.
She having made the king of Circassy
Salute the visage of old mother earth,
Traversed a wood, and that wood past, a mountain;
And stopt at length beside a lovely fountain.

XXXIV.

Through a delicious mead the fountain-rill,
By ancient trees o'ershaded, glides away;
And him whose ear its pleasing murmurs fill,
Invites to drink, and on its banks to stay;
On the left side a cultivated hill
Excludes the fervors of the middle day.
As first the damsel thither turns her eyes,
A youthful cavalier she seated spies;

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XXXV.

A cavalier, who underneath the shade,
Seems lost, as in a melancholy dream;
And on the bank, which gaudy flowers displayed,
Reposing, overhangs the crystal stream.
His horse beneath a spreading beech is laid,
And from a bough the shield and helmet gleam.
While his moist eyes, and sad and downcast air,
Speak him the broken victim of despair.

XXXVI.

Urged by the passion lodged in every breast,
A restless curiosity to know
Of others' cares, the gentle maid addressed
The knight, and sought the occasion of his woe.
And he to her his secret grief confessed,
Won by her gentle speech and courteous show,
And by that gallant bearing, which at sight,
Prepared who saw her for a nimble knight.

XXXVII.

"Fair sir, a band of horse and foot," he said,
"I brought to Charlemagne; and thither pressed,
"Where he an ambush for Marsilius spread,
"Descending from the Pyrenean crest;
"And in my company a damsel led,
"Whose charms with fervid love had fired my breast.
"When, as we journey by Rhone's current, I
"A rider on a winged courser spy.

XXXVIII.

"The robber, whether he were man or shade,
"Or goblin damned to everlasting woe,
"As soon as he beheld my dear-loved maid,
"Like falcon, who, descending, aims its blow,
"Sank in a thought and rose; and soaring, laid
"Hands on his prize, and snatched her from below.
"So quick the rape, that all appeared a dream,
"Until I heard in air the damsel's scream.

XXXIX.

"The ravening kite so swoops and plunders, when
"Hovering above the sheltered yard, she spies
"A helpless chicken near unwatchful hen,
"Who vainly dins the thief with after cries.
"I cannot reach the mountain-robber's den,
"Compassed with cliffs, or follow one who flies.
"Besides, way-foundered is my weary steed,
"Who 'mid these rocks has wasted wind and speed.

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XL.

"But I, like one who from his bleeding side
"Would liefer far have seen his heart out-torn,
"Left my good squadrons masterless, to ride
"Along the cliffs, and passes least forlorn;
"And took the way (love served me for a guide)
"Where it appeared the ruthless thief had born,
"Ascending to his den, the lovely prey,
"What time he snatched my hope and peace away.

XLI.

"Six days I rode, from morn to setting sun,
"By horrid cliff, by bottom dark and drear;
"And giddy precipice, where path was none,
"Nor sign, nor vestiges of man were near.
"At last a dark and barren vale I won,
"Where caverned mountains and rude cliffs appear:
"Where in the middle rose a rugged block,
"With a fair castle planted on the rock.

XLII.

"From far it shone like flame, and seemed not dight
"Of marble or of brick; and in my eye
"More wonderful the work, more fair to sight
"The walls appeared, as I approached more nigh.
"I, after, learned that it was built by sprite
"Whom potent fumes had raised and sorcery:
"Who on this rock its towers of steel did fix,
"Case-hardened in the stream and fire of Styx.

XLIII.

"Each polished turret shines with such a ray
"That it defies the mouldering rust and rain:
"The robber scours the country night and day,
"And after harbours in this sure domain.
"Nothing is safe which he would bear away;
"Pursued with curses and with threats in vain.
"There (fruitless every hope to foil his art)
"The felon keeps my love, oh! say my heart.

XLIV.

"Alas! what more is left me but to eye
"Her prison on that cliff's aërial crest?
"Like the she-fox, who hears her offspring cry,
"Standing beneath the ravening eagle's nest;
"And since she has not wings to rise and fly,
"Runs round the rugged rock with hopeless quest.
"So inaccessible the wild dominion
"To whatsoever has not plume and pinion.

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XLV.

" While I so lingered where those rocks aspire,
" I saw a dwarf guide two of goodly strain;
" Whose coming added hope to my desire
" (Alas! desire and hope alike were vain)
" Both barons bold, and fearful in their ire:
" The one Gradasso, King of Sericane,
" The next, of youthful vigour, was a knight,
" Prized in the Moorish court, Rogero hight.

XLVI.

" The dwarf exclaimed, 'These champions will assay
'Their force with him who dwells on yonder steep,
'And by such strange and unattempted way
'Spurs the winged courser from his mountain-keep.'
" And I to the approaching warriors say,
'Pity, fair sirs, the cruel loss I weep,
'And, as I trust, yon daring spoiler slain,
'Give my lost lady to my arms again.'

XLVII.

" Then how my love was ravished I make known,
" Vouching with bitter tears my deep distress.
" They proffer aid, and down the path of stone
" Which winds about the craggy mountain, press.
" While I, upon the summit left alone,
" Look on, and pray to God for their success.
" Beneath the wily wizard's castle strong
" Extends a little plain, two bow-shots long.

XLVIII.

" Arrived beneath the craggy keep, the two
" Contend which warrior shall begin the fight.
" When, whether the first lot Gradasso drew,
" Or young Rogero held the honor light,
" The King of Sericane his bugle blew,
" And the rock rang and fortress on the height;
" And, lo! apparelled for the fearful course,
" The cavalier upon his winged horse!

XLIX.

" Upwards, by little and by little, springs
" The winged courser, as the pilgrim crane
" Finds not at first his balance and his wings,
" Running and scarcely rising from the plain;
" But when the flock is launched and scattered, flings
" His pinions to the wind, and soars amain.
" So straight the necromancer's upward flight,
" The eagle scarce attempts so bold a height.

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L.

" When it seems fit, he wheels his courser round,
" Who shuts his wings, and falling from the sky,
" Shoots like a well trained falcon to the ground,
" Who sees the quarry, duck or pigeon, fly:
" So, through the parting air, with whizzing sound,
" With rested lance, he darted from on high;
" And while Gradasso scarcely marks the foe
" He hears him swooping near, and feels the blow.

LI.

" The wizard on Gradasso breaks his spear,
" He wounds the empty air, with fury vain.
" This in the feathered monster breeds no fear;
" Who to a distance shifts, and swoops again.
" While that encounter made the Alfana rear,
" Thrown back upon her haunches, on the plain.
" The Alfana that the Indian monarch rode,
" The fairest was that ever man bestrode.

LII.

" Up to the starry sphere with swift ascent
" The wizard soars, then pounces from the sky,
" And strikes the young Rogero, who, intent
" Upon Gradasso, deems no danger nigh.
" Beneath the wizard's blow the warrior bent,
" Which made some deal his generous courser ply;
" And when to smite the shifting foe he turned,
" Him in the sky, and out of reach discerned.

LIII.

" His blows Rogero, now Gradasso, bruise
" On forehead, bosom, back, or flanks between;
" While he the warrior's empty blows eschews,
" Shifting so quickly that he scarce is seen.
" Now this, now that, the wizard seems to choose,
" The monster makes such spacious rings and clean,
" While the enchanter so deceives the knights,
" They view him not, and know not whence he smites.

LIV.

" Between the two on earth and him o' the sky,
" Until that hour the warfare lasted there,
" Which, spreading wide its veil of dusky dye,
" Throughout the world, discolours all things fair.
" What I beheld, I say; I add not, I,
" A tittle to the tale; yet scarcely dare
" To tell to other what I stood and saw;
" So strange it seems, so passing Nature's law.

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LV.

"Well covered in a goodly silken case,
"He, the celestial warrior, bore his shield;
"But why delayed the mantle to displace
"I know not, and its lucid orb concealed.
"Since this no sooner blazes in his face,
"Than his foe tumbles dazzled on the field;
"And while he, like a lifeless body, lies,
"Becomes the necromancer's helpless prize.

LVI.

"Like carbuncle, the magic buckler blazed,
"No glare was ever seen which shone so bright:
"Nor could the warriors choose but fall, amazed
"And blinded by the clear and dazzling light.
"I, too, that from a distant mountain gazed,
"Fell senseless; and when I regained my sight,
"After long time, saw neither knights nor page,
"Nor aught beside a dark and empty stage.

LVII.

"This while the fell enchanter, I supposed,
"Dragged both the warriors to his prison-cell;
"And by strange virtue of the shield disclosed,
"I from my hope and they from freedom fell:
"And thus I to the turrets, which enclosed
"My heart, departing, bade a last farewell.
"Now sum my griefs, and say if love combine
"Other distress or grief to match with mine."

LVIII.

The knight relapsed into his first disease,
After his melancholy tale was done.
This was Count Pinabel, the Maganzese,
Anselmo d' Altaripa's faithless son.
He, where the blood ran foul through all degrees,
Disdained to be the only virtuous one;
Nor played a simple part among the base,
Passing in vice the villains of his race.

LIX.

With aspect changing still, the beauteous dame
Hears what the mournful Maganzese narrates;
And, at first mention of Rogero's name,
Her radiant face with eager joy dilates.
But, full of pity, kindles into flame
As Pinabel his cruel durance states.
Nor finds she, though twice told, the story stale;
But makes him oft repeat and piece his tale.

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LX.

And, after, when she deemed that all was clear,
Cried to the knight, "Repose upon my say.
"To thee may my arrival well be dear,
"And thou as fortunate account this day.
"Straight wend me to the keep, sir cavalier,
"Which holds a jewel of so rich a ray:
"Nor shalt thou grudge thy labour and thy care,
"If envious Fortune do but play me fair."

LXI.

The knight replied, "Then nought to me remains
"But that I yonder mountain-passes show;
"And sure 'tis little loss to lose my pains,
"Where every thing is lost I prize below.
"But you would climb yon cliffs, and for your gains
"Will find a prison-house; and be it so!
"Whate'er betide you, blame yourself alone;
"You go forewarned to meet a fate foreshown."

LXII.

So said, the cavalier remounts his horse,
And serves the gallant damsel as a guide;
Who is prepared Rogero's gaol to force,
Or to be slain, or in his prison stied.
When lo! a messenger, in furious course,
Called to the dame to stay, and rode and cried.
This was the post who told Circassia's lord
What valiant hand had stretched him on the sward.

LXIII.

The courier, who so plied his restless heel,
News of Narbonne and of Montpelier bore:
How both had raised the standard of Castile,
All Acquamorta siding with the Moor;
And how Marseilles' disheartened men appeal
To her, who should protect her straightened shore;
And how, through him, her citizens demand
Counsel and comfort at their captain's hand.

LXIV.

This goodly town, with many miles of plain,
Which lie 'twixt Var and Rhone, upon the sea,
To her was given by royal Charlemagne:
Such trust he placed in her fidelity.
Still wont with wonder on the tented plain
The prowess of that valiant maid to see.
And now the panting courier, as I said,
Rode from Marseilles to ask the lady's aid.

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LXV.

Whether or not she should the call obey,
The youthful damsel doubts some little space;
Strong in one balance Fame and Duty weigh,
But softer thoughts both Fame and Duty chase:
And she, at length, resolved the emprize to assay,
And free Rogero from the enchanted place:
Or, should her valour in the adventure fail,
Would with the cherished lover share his jail.

LXVI.

And did with such excuse that post appay,
He was contented on her will to wait:
Then turned the bridle to resume her way
With Pinabel, who seemed no whit elate.
Since of that line he knows the damsel gay,
Held in such open and such secret hate;
And future trouble to himself foresees,
Were he detected as a Maganzese.

LXVII.

For 'twixt Maganza's and old Clermont's line
There was an ancient and a deadly feud:
And oft to blows the rival houses came,
And oft in civil blood their hands embrued.
And hence some treason to this gentle dame,
In his foul heart, the wicked County brewed;
Or, as the first occasion served, would stray
Out of the road, and leave her by the way.

LXVIII.

And so the traitor's troubled fancy rack
Fear, doubt, and his own native, rancorous mood,
That unawares he issued from the track,
And found himself within a gloomy wood:
Where a rough mountain reared its shaggy back,
Whose stony peak above the forest stood;
The daughter of Dordona's duke* behind,
Dogging his footsteps through the thicket blind.

LXIX.

He, when he saw himself within the brake,
Thought to abandon his unweeting foe;
And to the dame—"'Twere better that we make
"For shelter ere the gathering darkness grow;
"And, yonder mountain past, (save I mistake)
"A tower is seated in the vale below.
"Do you expect me then, while from the peak
"I measure the remembered place I seek."

* Bradamant.

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LXX.

So said, he pushed his courser up the height
Of that lone mountain; in his evil mind
Revolving, as he went, some scheme or sleight
To rid him of the gentle dame behind.
When lo! a rocky cavern met his sight,
Amid those precipices dark and blind:
Its sides descended thirty yards and more,
Worked smooth, and at the bottom was a door.

LXXI.

A void was at the bottom, where a wide
Portal conducted to an inner room:
From thence a light shone out on every side,
As of a torch illumining the gloom.
Fair Bradamant pursued her faithless guide,
Suspended there, and pondering on her doom:
And came upon the felon where he stood,
Fearing lest she might lose him in the wood.

LXXII.

When her approach the County's first intent
Made vain, the wily traitor sought to mend
His toils, and some new stratagem invent
To rid her thence, or bring her to her end.
And so to meet the approaching lady went,
And showed the cave, and prayed her to ascend;
And said that in its bottom he had seen
A gentle damsel of bewitching mien,

LXXIII.

Who, by her lovely semblance and rich vest,
Appeared a lady of no mean degree;
But melancholy, weeping, and distressed,
As one who pined there in captivity;
And that when he towards the entrance pressed,
To learn who that unhappy maid might be,
One on the melancholy damsel flew,
And her within that inner cavern drew.

LXXIV.

The beauteous Bradamant, who was more bold
Than wary, gave a ready ear; and, bent
To help the maid, imprisoned in that hold,
Sought but the means to try the deep descent.
Then, looking round, descried an elm-tree old,
Which furnished present means for her intent;
And from the tree, with boughs and foliage stored,
Lopt a long branch, and shaped it with her sword.

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LXXV.

The severed end she to the count commended,
Then, grasping it, hung down that entrance steep,
With her feet foremost, by her arms suspended:
When asking if she had the skill to leap,
The traitor, with a laugh, his hands extended,
And plunged his helpless prey into the deep.
"And thus," exclaimed the ruffian, "might I speed
"With thee each sucker of thy cursed seed!"

LXXVI.

But not, as was the will of Pinabel,
Such cruel lot fair Bradamant assayed;
For striking on the bottom of the cell,
The stout elm-bough so long her weight upstayed,
That, though it split and splintered where it fell,
It broke her fall, and saved the gentle maid.
Some while astounded there the lady lay,
As the ensuing canto will display.

CANTO III.

ARGUMENT.

Restored to sense, the beauteous Bradamant
Finds sage Melissa in the vaulted tomb,
And hears from her of many a famous plant
And warrior, who shall issue from her womb.
Next, to release Rogero from the haunt
Of old Atlantes, learns how from the groom,
Brunello hight, his virtuous ring to take;
And thus the knight's and others' fetters break.

I.

WHO will vouchsafe me voice that shall ascend
As high as I would raise my noble theme?
Who will afford befitting words, and lend
Wings to my verse, to soar the pitch I scheme?
Since fiercer fire for such illustrious end,
Than what was wont, may well my song beseem.
For this fair portion to my lord is due
Which sings the sires from whom his lineage grew.

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II.

Than whose fair line, 'mid those by heavenly grace
Chosen to minister this earth below,
You see not, Phœbus, in your daily race,
One that in peace or war doth fairer show;
Nor lineage that hath longer kept its place;
And still shall keep it, if the lights which glow
Within me, but aright inspire my soul,
While the blue heaven shall turn about the pole.

III.

But should I seek at full its worth to blaze,
Not mine were needful, but that noble lyre
Which sounded at your touch the thunderer's praise,
What time the giants sank in penal fire.
Yet should you instruments, more fit to raise
The votive work, bestow, as I desire,
All labour and all thought will I combine,
To shape and shadow forth the great design.

IV.

Till when, this chisel may suffice to scale
The stone, and give my lines a right direction;
And haply future study may avail,
To bring the stubborn labour to perfection.
Return we now to him, to whom the mail
Of hawberk, shield, and helm, were small protection:
I speak of Pinabel the Maganzeze,
Who hopes the damsel's death, whose fall he sees.

V.

The wily traitor thought that damsel sweet
Had perished on the darksome cavern's floor,
And with pale visage hurried his retreat
From that, through him contaminated door.
And, thence returning, clomb into his seat:
Then, like one who a wicked spirit bore,
To add another sin to evil deed,
Bore off with him the warlike virgin's steed.

VI.

Leave we sometime the wretch who, while he layed
Snares for another, wrought his proper doom;
And turn we to the damsel he betrayed,
Who had nigh found at once her death and tomb.
She, after rising from the rock, dismayed
At her shrewd fall, and gazing through the gloom,
Beheld and passed that inner door, which gave
Entrance to other and more spacious cave.

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VII.

For the first cavern in a second ended,
Fashioned in form of church, and large and square;
With roof by cunning architect extended
On shafts of alabaster rich and rare.
The flame of a clear-burning lamp ascended
Before the central altar; and the glare,
Illuminating all the space about,
Shone through the gate, and lit the cave without.

VIII.

Touched with the sanctifying thoughts which wait
On worthy spirit in a holy place,
She prays with eager lips, and heart elate,
To the Disposer of all earthly grace:
And, kneeling, hears a secret wicket grate
In the opposing wall; whence, face to face,
A woman issuing forth, the maid addresses,
Barefoot, ungirt, and with dishevelled tresses.

IX.

"O generous Bradamant," the matron cried,
"Know thine arrival in this hallowed hold
"Was not unauthorized of heavenly guide:
"And the prophetic ghost of Merlin told,
"Thou to this cave shoudst come by path untried,
"Which covers the renowned magician's mould.
"And here have I long time awaited thee,
"To tell what is the heavens' pronounced decree.

X.

"This is the ancient memorable cave
"Which Merlin[1], that enchanter sage, did make:
"Thou may'st have heard how that magician brave
"Was cheated by the Lady of the Lake.
"Below, beneath the cavern, is the grave
"Which holds his bones; where, for that lady's sake,
"His limbs (for such her will) the wizard spread.
"Living he laid him there, and lies there dead.

XI.

"Yet lives the spirit of immortal strain;
"Lodged in the enchanter's corpse, till to the skies
"The trumpet call it, or to endless pain,
"As it with dove or raven's wing shall rise.
"Yet lives the voice, and thou shalt hear how plain
"From its sepulchral case of marble cries:
"Since this has still the past and future taught
"To every wight that has its counsel sought.

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XII

" Long days have passed since I from distant land
" My course did to this cemetery steer,
" That in the solemn mysteries I scanned,
" Merlin to me the truth should better clear ;
" And having compassed the design I planned,
" A month beyond, for thee, have tarried here ;
" Since Merlin, still with certain knowledge summing
" Events, prefixed this moment for thy coming."

XIII.

The daughter of Duke Aymon stood aghast,
And silent listened to the speech ; while she
Knew not, sore marvelling at all that passed,
If 'twere a dream or a reality.
At length, with modest brow, and eyes down-cast,
Replied (like one that was all modesty),
" And is this wrought for me ? and have I merit
" Worthy the workings of prophetic spirit ?"

XIV.

And full of joy the adventure strange pursues,
Moving with ready haste behind the dame,
Who brings her to the sepulchre which mews
The bones and spirit, erst of Merlin's name.
The tomb, of hardest stone which masons use,
Shone smooth and lucid, and as red as flame.
So that although no sun-beam pierced the gloom,
Its splendour lit the subterraneous room.

XV.

Whether it be the native operation
Of certain stones, to shine like torch i' the dark,
Or whether force of spell or fumigation,
(A guess that seems to come more near the mark)
Or sign made under mystic constellation,
The blaze that came from the sepulchral ark
Discovered sculpture, colour, gems, and gilding,
And whatsoever else adorned the building.

XVI.

Scarcely had Bradamant above the sill
Lifted her foot, and trod the secret cave,
When the live spirit, in clear tones that thrill,
Addressed the martial virgin from the grave ;
" May Fortune, chaste and noble maid, fulfil
" Thine every wish !" exclaimed the wizard brave,
" Since from thy womb a princely race shall spring,
" Whose name through Italy and earth shall ring.

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XVII.

" The noble blood derived from ancient Troy[2],
" Mingling in thee its two most glorious streams,
" Shall be the ornament, and flower, and joy,
" Of every lineage on which Phœbus beams,
" Where genial stars lend warmth, or cold annoy,
" Where Indus, Tagus, Nile, or Danube gleams;
" And in thy progeny and long drawn line
" Shall marquises, counts, dukes, and Cæsars shine.

XVIII.

" Captains and cavaliers shall spring from thee,
" Who both by knightly lance and prudent lore,
" Shall once again to widowed Italy
" Her ancient praise and fame in arms restore;
" And in her realms just lords shall seated be,
" (Such Numa and Augustus were of yore),
" Who with their government, benign and sage,
" Shall re-create on earth the golden age.

XIX.

" Then, that the will of Heaven be duly brought
" To a fair end through thee, in fitting date,
" Which from the first to bless thy love has wrought,
" And destined young Rogero for thy mate,
" Let nothing interpose to break that thought,
" But boldly tread the path prescribed by fate;
" Nor let aught stay thee till the thief be thrown
" By thy good lance, who keeps thee from thine own."

XX.

Here Merlin ceased, that for the solemn feat
Melissa might prepare with fitting spell,
To show bold Bradamant, in aspect meet,
The heirs who her illustrious race should swell.
Hence many sprites she chose; but from what seat
Evoked, I know not, or if called from hell;
And gathered in one place (so bade the dame),
In various garb and guise the shadows came.

XXI.

This done, into the church she called the maid,
Where she had drawn a magic ring, as wide
As might contain the damsel, prostrate laid;
With the full measure of a palm beside.
And on her head, lest spirit should invade,
A pentacle for more assurance tied.[3]
So bade her hold her peace, and stand and look,
Then read, and schooled the demons from her book.

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XXII.

Lo! forth of that first cave what countless swarm
Presses upon the circle's sacred round,
But, when they would the magic rampart storm,
Finds the way barred as if by fosse or mound;
Then back the rabble turns of various form;
And when it thrice with bending march has wound
About the circle, troops into the cave,
Where stands that beauteous urn, the wizard's grave

XXIII.

To tell at large the puissant acts and worth,
"And name of each who, figured in a sprite,
"Is present to our eyes before his birth,"
Said sage Melissa to the damsel bright;
"To tell the deeds which they shall act on earth,
"Were labour not to finish with the night.
"Hence I shall call few worthies of thy line,
"As time and fair occasion shall combine.

XXIV.

"See yonder first-born of thy noble breed,
"Who well reflects thy fair and joyous face;
"He, first of thine and of Rogero's seed,[4]
"Shall plant in Italy thy generous race.
"In him behold who shall distain the mead,
"And his good sword with blood of Pontier base;
"The mighty wrong chastised, and traitor's guilt,
"By whom his princely father's blood was spilt.

XXV.

"By him King Desiderius shall be pressed,[5]
"The valiant leader of the Lombard horde:
"And of the fiefs of Calaon and Este;
"For this imperial Charles shall make him lord.
"Hubert,[6] thy grandson, comes behind; the best
"Of Italy, with arms and belted sword:
"Who shall defend the church from barbarous foes,
"And more than once assure her safe repose.

XXVI.

Alberto next, unconquered captain, see,[7]
"Whose trophies shall so many fanes array.
"Hugh, the bold son, is with the sire, and he
"Shall conquer Milan, and the snakes display.
"Azo, that next approaching form shall be,
"And, his good brother dead, the Insubri sway.[8]
"Lo! Albertazo! by whose rede undone,[9]
"See Berengarius banished, and his son.

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Bradamante at the Tomb of Merlin.

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XXVII.

"With him shall the imperial Otho join
"In wedlock worthily his daughter fair.
"And lo! another Hugh! O noble line![10]
"O! sire succeeded by an equal heir!
"He, thwarting with just cause their ill design,
"Shall trash the Romans' pride who overbear;
"Shall from their hands the sovereign pontiff take,
"With the third Otho, and their leaguer break.

XXVIII.

"See Fulke, who to his brother will convey[11]
"All his Italian birth-right, and command
"To take a mighty dukedom far away
"From his fair home, in Almayn's northern land.
"There he the house of Saxony shall stay,
"And prop the ruin with his saving hand;
"This in his mother's right he shall possess,
"And with his progeny maintain and bless.

XXIX.

"More famed for courtesy than warlike deed,
"Azo the second, he who next repairs![12]
"Bertoldo and Albertazo are his seed:
"And, lo! the father walks between his heirs:
"By Parma's walls I see the Germans bleed,
"Their second Henry quelled; such trophy bears
"The one renowned in story's future page:
"The next shall wed Matilda, chaste and sage.

XXX.

"His virtues shall deserve so fair a flower,
"(And in his age, I wot, no common grace)
"To hold the half of Italy in dower,
"With that descendant of first Henry's race.
"Rinaldo shall succeed him in his power[13],
"Pledge of Bertoldo's wedded love, and chase
"Fierce Frederick Barbarossa's hireling bands;
"Saving the church from his rapacious hands.

XXXI.

"Another Azo rules Verona's town,[14]
"With its fair fields; and two great chiefs this while
"(One wears the papal, one the imperial crown),*
"The baron, Marquis of Ancona style.
"But to show all who rear the gonfalon
"Of the consistory, amid that file,
"Were task too long; as long to tell each deed
"Achieved for Rome by thy devoted seed.

* Otho IV. Honorius II.

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XXXII.

"See Fulke and Obyson,[15] more Azos, Hughs!
"Both Henrys!—mark the father and his boy.
"Two Guelphs: the first fair Umbria's land subdues,[16]
"And shall Spoleto's ducal crown enjoy.
"Behold the princely phantom that ensues,
"Shall turn fair Italy's long grief to joy;
"I speak of the fifth Azo of thy strain,[17]
"By whom shall Ezelin be quelled and slain.

XXXIII.

"Fierce Ezelin, that most inhuman lord,
"Who shall be deemed by men a child of hell,
"And work such evil, thinning with the sword
"Who in Ausonia's wasted cities dwell;
"Rome shall no more her Anthony record,
"Her Marius, Sylla, Nero, Cajus fell.
"And this fifth Azo shall to scathe and shame
"Put Frederick, second Cæsar of the name.*

XXXIV.

"He, with his better sceptre well contented,
"Shall rule the city, seated by the streams,[18]
"Where Phœbus to his plaintive lyre lamented
"The son, ill-trusted with the father's beams;
"Where Cygnus spread his pinions, and the scented
"Amber was wept, as fabling poet dreams.
"To him such honour shall the church decree;
"Fit guerdon of his works, and valour's fee.

XXXV.

"But does no laurel for his brother twine,[19]
"Aldobrandino, who will carry cheer
"To Rome (when Otho, with the Ghibelline,
"Into the troubled capital strikes fear),
"And make the Umbri and Piceni sign
"Their shame, and sack the cities far and near;
"Then hopeless to relieve the sacred hold,
"Sue to the neighbouring Florentine for gold:

XXXVI.

"And trust a noble brother to his hands,
"Boasting no dearer pledge, the pact to bind:
"And next, victorious o'er the German bands,
"Give his triumphant ensigns to the wind:
"To the afflicted church restore her lands,
"And take due vengeance of Celano's kind.
"Then die, cut off in manhood's early flower,
"Beneath the banners of the Papal power?

* The Emperor Frederick the Second.

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XXXVII.

"He, dying, leaves his brother Azo heir
"Of Pesaro and fair Ancona's reign,
"And all the cities which 'twixt Tronto are,[20]
"And green Isauro's stream, from mount to main;
"With other heritage, more rich and rare,
"Greatness of mind, and faith without a stain.
"All else is Fortune's in this mortal state;
"But Virtue soars beyond her love and hate.

XXXVIII.

"In good Rinaldo equal worth shall shine,[21]
"(Such is the promise of his early fire)
"If such a hope of thine exalted line,
"Dark Fate and Fortune wreck not in their ire.
"Alas! from Naples in this distant shrine,
"Naples, where he is hostage for his sire,
"His dirge is heard: A stripling of thy race,
"Young Obyson, shall fill his grandsire's place.[22]

XXXIX.

"This lord to his dominion shall unite
"Gay Reggio, joined to Modena's bold land.
"And his redoubted valour lend such light,
"The willing people call him to command.
"Sixth of the name, his Azo rears upright[23]
"The church's banner in his noble hand:
"Fair Adria's fief to him in dower shall bring
"The child of second Charles, Sicilia's king.

XL.

"Behold in yonder friendly group agreed,
"Many fair princes of illustrious name;
"Obyson, Albert famed for pious deed,
"Aldobrandino, Nicholas the lame.[24]
"But we may pass them by, for better speed,
"Faenza conquered, and their feats and fame;
"With Adria (better held and surer gain)
"Which gives her title to the neighbouring main:

XLI.

"And that fair town, whose produce is the rose,[25]
"The rose which gives it name in Grecian speech:
"That, too, which fishy marshes round enclose,[26]
"And Po's two currents threat with double breach;
"Whose townsmen loath the lazy calm's repose,
"And pray that stormy waves may lash the beach.
"I pass, mid towns and towers, a countless store,
"Argenta, Lugo, and a thousand more.

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XLII.

"See Nicholas, whom in his tender age,[27]
"The willing people shall elect their lord;
"He who shall laugh to scorn the civil rage
"Of the rebellious Tideus and his horde;
"Whose infantine delight shall be to wage
"The mimic fight, and sweat with spear and sword:
"And through the discipline such nurture yields,
"Shall flourish as the flower of martial fields.

XLIII.

"By him rebellious plans are overthrown,
"And turned upon the rash contriver's head;
"And so each stratagem of warfare blown,
"That vainly shall the cunning toils be spread.
"To the third Otho this too late is known,
"Of Parma and the pleasant Reggio dread;
"Who shall by him be spoiled in sudden strife,
"Of his possessions and his wretched life.

XLIV.

"And still the fair dominion[28] shall increase,
"And without wrong its spreading bounds augment;
"Nor its glad subjects violate the peace,
"Unless provoked some outrage to resent,
"And hence its wealth and welfare shall not cease;
"And the Divine Disposer be content
"To let it flourish (such his heavenly love!)
"While the celestial spheres revolve above.

XLV.

"Lo! Lionel! lo! Borso great and kind![29]
"First duke of thy fair race, his realm's delight;
"Who reigns secure, and shall more triumphs find
"In peace, than warlike princes win in fight.
"Who struggling Fury's hands shall tie behind
"Her back, and prison Mars, removed from sight.
"His fair endeavours bent to bless and stay
"The people, that his sovereign rule obey.

XLVI.

"Lo! Hercules, who may reproach his neighbour,[30]
"With foot half burnt, and halting gait and slow,
"That at Budrìo, with protecting sabre,
"He saved his troops from fatal overthrow;
"Not that, for guerdon of his glorious labour,
"He should distress and vex him as a foe;
"Chased into Barco. It were hard to say,
"If most he shine in peace or martial fray.

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XLVII.

"Lucania, Puglia, and Calabria's strand,
"Shall with the rumour of his prowess ring:
"Where he shall strive in duel, hand to hand,[31]
"And gain the praise of Catalonia's king.
"Him, with the wisest captains of the land
"His worth shall class; such fame his actions bring:
"And he the fief shall win like valiant knight,
"Which thirty years before was his of right.

XLVIII.

"To him his grateful city owes a debt,
"The greatest subjects to their lord can owe;
"Not that he moves her from a marsh, to set
"Her stones, where Ceres' fruitful treasures grow.
"Nor that he shall enlarge her bounds, nor yet
"That he shall fence her walls against the foe;
"Nor that he theatre and dome repairs,
"And beautifies her streets and goodly squares;

XLIX.

"Not that he keeps his lordship well defended
"From the winged lions' claws and fierce attacks;[32]
"Nor that, when Gallic ravage is extended,
"And the invader all Italia sacks,
"His happy state alone is unoffended;[33]
"Unharassed, and ungalled by toll or tax.
"Not for these blessings I recount, and more
"His grateful realm shall Hercules adore;

L.

"So much as that from him shall spring a pair
"Of brothers, leagued no less by love than blood;
"Who shall be all that Leda's children were;
"The just Alphonso, Hippolite the good[34].
"And as each twin resigned the vital air
"His fellow to redeem from Stygian flood,
"So each of these would gladly spend his breath,
"And for his brother brave perpetual death.

LI.

"In these two princes' excellent affection,
"Their happy lieges more assurance feel,
"Than if their noble town, for its protection,
"Were girded twice by Vulcan's works of steel.
"And so Alphonso in his good direction,
"Justice, with knowledge and with love, shall deal,
"Astrea shall appear returned from heaven,
"To this low earth to varying seasons given.

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LII.

" Well is it that his wisdom shines as bright
" As his good sire's, nor is his valour less ;
" Since here usurping Venice arms for fight,
" And her full troops his scanty numbers press,
" There she (I know not if more justly hight[35]
" Mother or stepmother) brings new distress ;
" But, if a mother, scarce to him more mild
" Than Progne or Medea to her child.

LIII.

" This chief, what time soever he shall go
" Forth with his faithful crew, by night or day,
" By water or by land, will shame the foe,
" With memorable rout and disarray ;
" And this too late Romagna's sons shall know.
" Led against former friends in bloody fray,
" Who shall bedew the champaign with their blood,
" By Santern, Po, and Zaniolus' flood.

LIV.

" This shall the Spaniard know, to his dismay,[36]
" 'Mid the same bounds, whom papal gold shall gain ;
" Who shall from him Bastìa win and slay,
" With cruel rage, her hapless Castellain,
" The city taken ; but shall dearly pay ;
" His crime, the town retrieved, and victor slain :
" Since in the rescued city not a groom
" Is left alive, to bear the news to Rome.

LV.

" 'Tis he, who with his counsel and his lance,
" Shall win the honours of Romagna's plain,
" And open to the chivalry of France
" The victory over Julius, leagued with Spain.
" Paunch-deep in human blood shall steeds advance
" In that fierce strife, and struggle through the slain,
" 'Mid crowded fields which scarce a grave supply,
" Where Greek, Italian, Frank, and Spaniard die.

LVI.

" Lo ! who in priestly vesture clad, is crowned
" With purple hat, conferred in hallowed dome !
" 'Tis he, the wise, the liberal, the renowned
" Hippolitus, great cardinal of Rome ;[37]
" Whose actions shall in every region sound,
" Where'er the honoured muse shall find a home :
" To whose glad era, by indulgent heaven,
" As to Augustus' is a Maro given.[38]

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LVII.

" His deeds adorn his race, as from his car
" The glorious sun illumes the subject earth
" More than the silver moon or lesser star;
" So far all others he transcends in worth.
" I see this captain, ill bested for war,
" Go forth afflicted, and return in mirth:
" Backed by few foot, and fewer cavaliers,[39]
" He homeward barks, and fifteen gallies steers.

LVIII.

" Two Sigismonds, the first, the second, see;
" To these Alphonso's five good sons succeed;
" Whose glories spread o'er seas and land shall be.
" The first shall wed a maid of France's seed.
" This is the second Hercules; and *he*,[40]
" (That you may know their every name and deed),
" Hippolitus; who with the light shall shine,
" Of his wise uncle, gilding all his line.

LIX.

" Francis the third comes next; the other two
" Alphonsos both;—but yet again I say,
" Thy line through all its branches to pursue,
" Fair virgin, would too long protract thy stay;
" And Phœbus, many times, to mortal view,
" Would quench and light again the lamp of day.
" Then, with thy leave, 'tis time the pageant cease,
" And I dismiss the shades and hold my peace."

LX.

So with the lady's leave the volume closed,
Whose precepts to her will the spirits bent.
And they, where Merlin's ancient bones reposed,
From the first cavern disappearing, went.
Then Bradamant her eager lips unclosed,
Since the divine enchantress gave consent;
" And who," she cried, " that pair of sorrowing mien
" Alphonso and Hippolitus between?

LXI.

" Sighing, those youths advanced amid the show,
" Their brows with shame and sorrow overcast,
" With downward look, and gait subdued and slow:
" I saw the brothers shun them as they passed."
Melissa heard the dame with signs of woe,
And thus, with streaming eyes, exclaim'd at last:
" Ah! luckless youths,[41] with vain illusions fed,
" Whither by wicked men's bad counsel led!

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LXII.

"O, worthy seed of Hercules the good,
"Let not their guilt beyond thy love prevail;
"Alas! the wretched pair are of thy blood,
"So may prevailing pity turn the scale!"
And in a sad and softer tone pursued,
"I will not further press the painful tale.
"Chew on fair fancy's food: Nor deem unmeet
"I will not with a bitter chase the sweet.

LXIII.

"Soon as to-morrow's sun shall gild the skies
"With his first light, myself the way will show
"To where the wizard knight Rogero sties;
"And built with polished steel the ramparts glow:
"So long as through deep woods thy journey lies,
"Till, at the sea arrived, I shall bestow
"Such new instructions for the future way,
"That thou no more shalt need Melissa's stay."

LXIV.

All night the maid reposes in the cave,
And the best part in talk with Merlin spends;
While with persuasive voice the wizard grave
To her Rogero's honest love commends;
Till from the vault goes forth that virgin brave,
As through the sky the rising sun ascends,
By path, long space obscure on either side,
The weïrd woman still her faithful guide.

LXV.

They gain a hidden glen, which heights inclose,
And mountains inaccessible to man:
And they all day toil on, without repose,
Where precipices frowned and torrents ran.
And (what may some diversion interpose)
Sweet subjects of discourse together scan,
In conference, which best might make appear
The rugged road less dismal and severe.

LXVI.

Of these the greater portion served to guide
(Such the wise woman's scope) the warlike dame;
And teach by what device might be untied
Rogero's gyves, if stedfast were her flame.
"If thou wert Mars himself, or Pallas," cried
The sage Melissa; "though with thee there came
"More than King Charles or Agramant command,
"Against the wizard foe thou could'st not stand.

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LXVII.

"Besides that it is walled about with steel,
"And inexpugnable his tower, and high;
"Besides that his swift horse is taught to wheel,
"And caracol and gallop in mid sky,
"He bears a mortal shield of power to seal,
"As soon as 'tis exposed, the dazzled eye;
"And so invades each sense the splendour shed,
"That he who sees the blaze remains as dead.

LXVIII.

"And lest to shut thine eyes, thou should'st suppose
"Might serve, contending with the wizard knight;
"How would'st thou know, when both in combat close,
"When he strikes home, or when eschews the fight?
"But to escape the blaze which blinds his foes,
"And render vain each necromantic sleight,
"Have here a speedy mean which cannot miss;
"Nor can the world afford a way but this.

LXIX.

"King Agramant of Africa a ring,
"Thieved from an Indian queen[42] by subtle guiles,
"Has to a baron of his following
"Consigned, who now precedes us by few miles;
"Brunello he. Who wears the gift shall bring
"To nought all sorceries and magic wiles.
"In thefts and cheats Brunello is as well
"Instructed, as the sage in charm and spell.

LXX.

"Brunello, he so practised and so sly
"As now I tell thee, by his king is sent,
"That he with aid of mother wit may try,
'And of this ring, well proved in like event,
"To take Rogero from the castle high;
"So has he boasted, by the wizard pent:
"And to his lord such promise did impart,
"Who has Rogero's presence most at heart.

LXXI.

"That his escape to thee alone may owe,
"Not to the king, the youthful cavalier,
"How to release Rogero from his foe
"And his enchanted cage, prepare to hear.
"Three days along the shingle shalt thou go,
"Beside the sea, whose waves will soon appear
"Thee the third day shall to a hostel bring,
"Where he shall come who bears the virtuous ring.

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LXXII.

"That thou may'st recognise the man, in height
"Less than six palms, observe one at this inn
"Of black and curly hair the dwarfish wight!
"Beard overgrown about the cheek and chin;
"With shaggy brow, swoln eyes, and cloudy sight,
"A nose close flattened, and a sallow skin;
"To this, that I may make my sketch complete,
"Succinctly clad, like courier, goes the cheat.

LXXIII.

"Thy conversation with this man shall turn
"Upon enchantment, spell, and mystic pact:
"And thou shalt, in thy talk, appear to yearn
"To prove the wizard's strength, as is the fact.
"But, lady, let him not thy knowledge learn
"Of his good ring, which mars all magic act:
"He shall propose to bring thee as a guide
"To the tall castle, whither thou would'st ride.

LXXIV.

"Follow him close, and viewing (for a sign),
"Now near, the fortress of the enchanter hoar;
"Let no false pity there thy mind incline
"To stay the execution of my lore.
"Give him his death; but let him not divine
"Thy thought, nor grant him respite; for before
"Thine eyes, concealed by it, the caitiff slips
"If once he place the ring between his lips."

LXXV.

Discoursing thus, they came upon the sea
Where Garonne near fair Bordeaux meets the tide;
Here, fellow travellers no more to be,
Some natural tears they drop and then divide.
Duke Aymon's child, who slumbers not till she
Release her knight, holds on till even-tide:
'Twas then the damsel at a hostel rested,
Where Sir Brunello was already guested.

LXXVI.

The maid Brunello knows as soon as found
(So was his image on her mind impressed),
And asks him whence he came, and whither bound;
And he replies and lies, as he is pressed.
The dame, who is forewarned, and knows her ground,
Feigns too as well as he, and lies her best:
And changes sex and sect, and name and land,
And her quick eye oft glances at his hand;

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LXXVII.

Oft glances at his restless hand, in fear
That he might undetected make some prize;
Nor ever lets the knave approach too near,
Well knowing his condition: In this guise
The couple stand together, when they hear
A sudden sound: but what that sound implies
I, sir, shall tell hereafter with its cause;
But first shall break my song with fitting pause.

CANTO IV.

ARGUMENT.

The old Atlantes suffers fatal wreck,
Foiled by the ring, and young Rogero freed,
Who soars in air till he appears a speck,
Mounted upon the wizard's winged steed.
Obedient to the royal Charles's beck,
He who had followed Love's imperious lead,
Rinaldo, disembarks on British land,
And saves Geneura, doomed to stake and brand.

I.

THOUGH an ill mind appear in simulation,
And, for the most, such quality offends;
'Tis plain that this in many a situation
Is found to further beneficial ends,
And save from blame, and danger, and vexation;
Since we converse not always with our friends,
In this, less clear than clouded, mortal life,
Beset with snares, and full of envious strife.

II.

If after painful proof we scarcely find
A real friend, through various chances sought,
To whom we may communicate our mind,
Keeping no watch upon our wandering thought;
What should the young Rogero's lady kind
Do with Brunello, not sincere, but fraught
With treasons manifold, and false and tainted,
As by the good enchantress truly painted?

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III.

She feigns as well with that deceitful scout;
(Fitting with him the father of all lies)
Watches his thievish hands in fear and doubt;
And follows every motion with her eyes.
When lo! a mighty noise is heard without!
"O mighty mother! king of heaven!" she cries,
"What thing is this I hear?" and quickly springs
Towards the place from whence the larum rings,

IV.

And sees the host and all his family,
Where, one to door, and one to window slips,
With eyes upturned and gazing at the sky,
As if to witness comet or eclipse.
And there the lady views, with wondering eye,
What she had scarce believed from other's lips
A feathered courser, sailing through the rack,
Who bore an armed knight upon his back.

V.

Broad were his pinions, and of various hue;
Seated between, a knight the saddle pressed,
Clad in steel arms, which wide their radiance threw,
His wonderous course directed to the west:
There dropt among the mountains lost to view.
And this was, as that host informed his guest,
(And true the tale) a sorcerer, who made
Now farther, now more near, his frequent raid.

VI.

"He, sometimes towering, soars into the skies;
"Then seems, descending, but to skim the ground:
"And of all beauteous women makes a prize,
"Who, to their mischief, in these parts are found.
"Hence, whether in their own or others' eyes,
"Esteemed as fair, the wretched damsels round,
"(And all in fact the felon plunders) hide;
"As fearing of the sun to be descried.

VII.

"A castle on the Pyrenean height
"The necromancer keeps, the work of spell,"
(The host relates) "of steel, so fair and bright,
"All nature cannot match the wonderous shell.
"There many cavaliers, to prove their might,
"Have gone, but none returned the tale to tell.
"So that I doubt, fair sir, the thief enthralls
"Or slays whoever in the encounter falls."

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VIII.

The watchful maid attends to every thing,
Glad at her heart, and trusting to complete
(What she shall compass by the virtuous ring)
The downfall of the enchanter and his seat.
Then to the host—"A guide I pray thee bring,
"Who better knows than me the thief's retreat.
"So burns my heart, (nor can I choose but go)
"To strive in battle with this wizard foe."

IX.

"It shall not need," exclaimed the dwarfish Moor,
"For I, myself, will serve you as a guide;
"Who have the road set down, with other lore,
"So that you shall rejoice with me to ride."
He meant the ring, but further hint forbore;
Lest dearly he the avowal should abide.
And she to him—"Your guidance gives me pleasure."
Meaning by this she hoped to win his treasure.

X.

What useful was to say, she said, and what
Might hurt her with the Saracen, concealed.
Well suited to her ends, the host had got
A palfrey, fitting for the road or field.
She bought the steed, and as Aurora shot
Her rosy rays, rode forth with spear and shield:
And maid and courier through a valley wind,
Brunello now before and now behind.

XI.

From wood to wood, from mount to mountain hoar,
They clomb a summit, which in cloudless sky
Discovers France and Spain, and either shore.
As from a peak of Apennine the eye[2]
May Tuscan and Sclavonian sea explore,
There, whence we journey to Camaldoli.
Then through a rugged path and painful wended,
Which thence into a lowly vale descended.

XII.

A rock from that deep valley's centre springs;
Bright walls of steel about its summit go:
And this as high that airy summit flings,
As it leaves all the neighbouring cliffs below.
He may not scale the height who has not wings
And vainly would each painful toil bestow.
"Lo! where his prisoners!" Sir Brunello cries,
"Ladies and cavaliers, the enchanter sties."

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XIII.

Scarped smooth upon four parts, the mountain bare
Seemed fashioned with the plumb, by builder's skill
Nor upon any side was path or stair,
Which furnished man the means to climb the hill.
The castle seemed the very nest and lair
Of animal, supplied with plume and quill.
And here the damsel knows 'tis time to slay
The wily dwarf, and take the ring away.

XIV.

But deems it foul, with blood of man to stain
Unarmed and of so base a sort, her brand;
For well, without his death, she may obtain
The costly ring; and so suspends her hand.
Brunello, off his guard, with little pain,
She seized, and strongly bound with girding band
Then to a lofty fir made fast the string;
But from his finger first withdrew the ring.

XV.

Neither by tears, nor groans, nor sound of woe,
To move the stedfast maid the dwarf had power:
She down the rugged hill descended slow,
Until she reached the plain beneath the tower.
Then gave her bugle breath, the keep below,
To call the castled wizard to the stower:
And when the sound was finished, threatening cried,
And called him to the combat and defied.

XVI.

Not long within his gate the enchanter stayed,
After he heard the voice and bugle ring.
Against the foe, who seemed a man, arrayed
In arms, with him the horse is on the wing.
But his appearance well consoled the maid,
Who, with small cause for fear, beheld him bring
Nor mace, nor rested lance, nor biting sword,
Wherewith the corselet might be bruised or gored.

XVII.

In his left arm alone his shield he took,
Covered all o'er with silk of crimson hue;
In his right-hand he held an open book,
Whence, as the enchanter read, strange wonder grew:
For often times, to sight, the lance he shook;
And flinching eyelids could not bide the view;
With tuck or mace he seemed to smite the foe:
But sate aloof and had not struck a blow.

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XVIII.

No empty fiction wrought by magic lore,
But natural was the steed the wizard pressed:
For him a filly to a griffin bore;
Hight hippogryph. In wings and beak and crest,
Formed like his sire, as in the feet before;
But like the mare, his dam, in all the rest.
Such on Riphæan hills, though rarely found,
Are bred, beyond the frozen ocean's bound.

XIX.

Drawn by enchantment from his distant lair,
The wizard thought but how to tame the foal;
And, in a month, instructed him to bear
Saddle and bit, and gallop to the goal;
And execute on earth or in mid air,
All shifts of manege, course and caracole;
He with such labour wrought. This only real,
Where all the rest was hollow and ideal.

XX.

This truth by him with fictions was combined,
Whose sleight passed red for yellow, black for white:
But all his vain enchantments could not blind
The maid, whose virtuous ring assured her sight:
Yet she her blows discharges at the wind;
And spurring here and there prolongs the fight.
So drove or wheeled her steed, and smote at nought,
And practised all she had before been taught.

XXI.

When she sometime had fought upon her horse,
She from the courser on her feet descends:
To compass and more freely put in force,
As by the enchantress schooled, her wily ends.
The wizard, to display his last resource,
Unweeting the defence, towards her wends.
He bares the shield, secure to blind his foe,
And by the magic light, astonished, throw.

XXII.

The shield might have been shown at first, nor he
Needed to keep the cavaliers at bay;
But that he loved some master-stroke to see,
Achieved by lance or sword in single fray.
As with the captive mouse, in sportive glee,
The wily cat is sometimes seen to play;
Till waxing wroth, or weary of her prize,
She bites, and at a snap the prisoner dies.

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XXIII.

To cat and mouse, in battles fought before,
I liken the magician and his foes;
But the comparison holds good no more:
For, with the ring, the maid against him goes;
Firm and attentive still, and watching sore,
Lest upon her the wizard should impose:
And as she sees him bare the wondrous shield,
Closes her eyes and falls upon the field.

XXIV.

Not that the shining metal could offend,
As wont those others, from its cover freed;
But so the damsel did, to make descend
The vain enchanter from his wonderous steed.
Nor was in ought defeated of her end;
For she no sooner on the grassy mead
Had laid her head, than wheeling widely round,
The flying courser pitched upon the ground.

XXV.

Already cased again, the shield was hung,
By the magician, at his saddle bow.
He lights and seeks her, who like wolf among
The bushes, couched in thicket, waits the roe;
She without more delay from ambush sprung,
As he drew near, and grappled fast the foe.
That wretched man, the volume by whose aid
He all his battles fought, on earth had laid:

XXVI.

And ran to bind her with a chain, which he,
Girt round about him for such purpose, wore;
Because he deemed she was no less to be
Mastered and bound than those subdued before
Him hath the dame already flung; by me
Excused with reason, if he strove not more.
For fearful were the odds between that bold
And puissant maid, and warrior weak and old!

XXVII.

Intending to behead the fallen foe,
She lifts her conquering hand; but in mid space,
When she beholds his visage, stops the blow,
As if disdaining a revenge so base.
She sees in him, her prowess has laid low,
A venerable sire, with sorrowing face;
Whose hair and wrinkles speak him. to her guess,
Of years six score and ten, or little less.

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XXVIII.

"Kill me, for love of God!" (afflicted sore,
The old enchanter full of wrath did cry)
But the victorious damsel was not more
Averse to kill, than he was bent to die.
To know who was the necromancer hoar
The gentle lady had desire, and why
The tower he in that savage place designed,
Doing such outrage foul to all mankind.

XXIX.

"Nor I, by malice moved, alas! poor wight,"
(The weeping necromancer answer made,)
"Built the fair castle on the rocky height,
"Nor yet for rapine ply the robber's trade;
"But only to redeem a gentle knight
"From danger sore and death, by love was swayed;
"Who, as the skies foreshow, in little season,
"Is doomed to die a christian, and by treason.

XXX.

"The sun beholds not 'twixt the poles, a Child
"So excellent as him, and passing fair;
"Who from his infancy, Rogero styled,
"(Atlantes I) was tutored by my care.
"By love of fame and evil stars beguiled,
"He follows into France Troyano's heir.*
"Him, in my eyes, than son esteemed more dear,
"I seek to snatch from France and peril near.

XXXI.

"I only built the beauteous keep to be
"Rogero's dungeon, safely harboured there;
"Who whilom was subdued in fight by me,
"As I to-day had hoped thyself to snare,
"And dames and knights, and more of high degree,
"Have to this tower conveyed, his lot to share,
"That with such partners of his prison pent,
"He might the loss of freedom less lament.

XXXII.

"Save they should seek to break their dungeon's bound,
"I grant my inmates every other pleasure.
"For whatsoever in the world is found,
"Search its four quarters, in this keep I treasure;
"(Whatever heart can wish or tongue can sound)
"Cates, brave attire, game, sport, or mirthful measure.
"My field well sown, I well had reaped my grain,
"But that thy coming makes my labour vain.

* Agramant.

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XXXIII.

"Ah! then unless thy heart less beauteous be
"Than thy sweet face, mar not my pious care;
"Take my steel buckler, this I give to thee,
"And take that horse, which flies so fast in air,
"Nor meddle with my castle more; or free
"One or two captive friends, the rest forbear—
"Or (for I crave but this) release them all,
"So that Rogero but remain my thrall.

XXXIV.

"Or if disposed to take him from my sight,
"Before the youth be into France conveyed,
"Be pleased to free my miserable sprite
"From its now rotted bark, long since decayed."
"Prate as thou wilt, I shall restore the knight
"To liberty," replied the martial maid,
"Nor offer shield and courser to resign,
"Which are not in thy gift,—already mine.

XXXV.

"Nor were they thine to take or to bestow,
"Would it appear that such exchange were wise;
"Thou sayest to save him from what stars foreshow,
"And cheat an evil influence of the skies
"Rogero is confined. Thou canst not know,
"Or knowing, canst not change his destinies:
"For, if unknown an ill so near to thee,
"Far less mayest thou another's fate foresee.

XXXVI.

"Seek not thy death from me; for the petition
"Is made in vain; but if for death thou sigh,
"Though the whole world refused the requisition,
"A soul resolved would find the means to die.
"But ope thy gates to give thy guests dismission
"Before thine hand the knot of life untie."
So spake the scornful dame with angry mock,
Speeding her captive still towards the rock.

XXXVII.

Bound by the conqueror with the chain he bore,
Atlantes walked, the damsel following nigh,
Who trusted not to the magician hoar,
Although he seemed subdued in port and eye.
Nor many paces went the pair, before
They at the mountain's foot the cleft espy,
With steps by which the rugged hill to round;
And climb, till to the castle-gate they wound:

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XXXVIII.

Atlantes from the threshold, graved by skill,
With characters and wondrous signs, upturned
A virtuous stone, where, underneath the sill,
Pots, with perpetual fire and secret, burned.
The enchanter breaks them; and at once the hill
To an inhospitable rock is turned.
Nor wall nor tower on any side is seen,
As if no castle there had ever been.

XXXIX.

Then from the lady's toils the wizard clears[3]
His limbs, as thrush escapes the fowler's snare;
With him as well his castle disappears,
And leaves the prisoned troop in open air;
From their gay lodgings, dames and cavaliers,
Unhoused upon that desert, bleak and bare.
And many at the freedom felt annoy,
Which dispossessed them of such life of joy.

XL.

There is Gradasso, there is Sacripant,[4]
There is Prasildo, noble cavalier,
Who with Rinaldo came from the Levant;
Iroldo, too, Prasildo's friend sincere.
And there, at last, the lovely Bradamant
Discerns Rogero, long desired and dear;
Who, when assured it was that lady, flew
With joyful cheer to greet the damsel true;

XLI.

As her he prized before his eyes, his heart,
His life; from that day cherished when she stood
Unmasqued for him, and from the fight apart;
And hence an arrow drank her virgin blood,
'Twere long to tell who launched the cruel dart,
And how the lovers wandered in the wood:
Now guided by the sun, and now benighted,
Here first since that encounter reunited.

XLII.

Now that the stripling sees her here, and knows
Alone she freed him from the wizard's nest,
He deems, his bosom with such joy overflows,
That he is singly fortunate and blest.
Thither, where late the damsel conquered, goes
The band, descending from the mountain's crest;
And finds the hippogryph, who bore the shield,
But in its case of crimson silk concealed.

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XLIII.

To take him by the rein the lady there
Approached, and he stood fast till she was nigh,
Then spread his pinions to the liquid air,
And at short distance lit, half-mountain high:
And, as she follows him with fruitless care,
Nor longer flight nor shorter will he try.
'Tis thus the raven, on some sandy beach,
Lures on the dog, and flits beyond his reach.

XLIV.

Gradasso, Sacripant, Rogero, who
With all those other knights below were met,
Where'er they hope he may return, pursue
The beast, and up and down, each pass beset.
He having led those others, as he flew,
Often to rocky height, and bottom wet,
Among the rocks of the moist valley dropt,
And at short distance from Rogero stopt.

XLV.

This was Atlantes the enchanter's deed,
Whose pious wishes still directed were,
To see Rogero from his peril freed:
This was his only thought, his only care;
Who for such end dispatched the winged steed,
Him out of Europe by this sleight to bear.
Rogero took his bridle, but in vain;
For he was restive to the guiding rein.

XLVI.

Now the bold youth from his Frontino flings
(Frontino was his gentle courser hight)
Then leaps on him who towers in air, and stings
And goads his haughty heart with rowels bright.
He runs a short career; then upward springs,
And through mid ether soars a fairer flight
Than hawk, from which the falconer plucks away
In time the blinding hood, and points her prey.

XLVII.

When her Rogero the fair dame discerned,
In fearful peril, soar so high a strain,
She stood long space amazed, ere she returned
To her right judgement, and sound wits again:
And what she erst of Ganymede had learned,
Snatched up to heaven from his paternal reign,
Feared might befall the stripling, born through air,
As gentle as young Ganymede and fair.

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XLVIII.

She on Rogero looks with stedfast eyes
As long as feeble sight can serve her use;
And in her mind next tracks him through the skies,
When sight in vain the cherished youth pursues.
And still renewing tears, and groans, and sighs,
Will not afford her sorrow peace or truce.
After the knight had vanished from her view,
Her eyes she on the good Frontino threw

XLIX.

And lest the courser should become the prey
Of the first traveller, who passed the glen,
Him will not leave; but thence to bear away
Resolves, in trust to see his lord again.
The griffin soars, nor can Rogero stay
The flying courser; while, beneath his ken,
Each peak and promontory sinks in guise,
That he discerns not flat from mountain-rise.

L.

After the hippogryph has won such height,
That he is lessened to a point, he bends
His course for where the sun, with sinking light,
When he goes round the heavenly crab, descends;
And shoots through air, like well-greased bark and light,
Which through the sea a wind propitious sends.
Him leave we on his way, who well shall speed,
And turn we to Rinaldo in his need.

LI.

Day after day the good Rinaldo fares,
Forced by the wind, the spacious ocean through;
Now westward borne, and now towards the Brabs;
For night and day the ceaseless tempest blew.
Scotland at last her dusky coast uprears,
And gives the Caledonian wood to view;
Which, through its shadowy groves of ancient oak,
Oft echoes to the champion's sturdy stroke.

LII.

Through this roves many a famous cavalier,
Renowned for feat in arms, of British strain;
And throng from distant land, or country near.
French, Norse, or German knights, a numerous train.
Let none, save he be valiant, venture here,
Where, seeking glory, death may be his gain.
Here Arthur, Galahalt and Gauvaine fought,
And well Sir Launcelot and Tristram wrought.

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LIII.

And other worthies of the table round;
(Of either table, whether old or new)[6]
Whose trophies yet remain upon the ground;
Proof of their valiant feats. Rinaldo true
Forthwith his armour and Bayardo found,
And landed on the woody coast: The crew
He bade, with all the haste they might, repair
To Berwick's neighbouring port, and wait him there.

LIV.

Without a guide or company he went
Through that wide forest; choosing now this way,
Now that, now other, as it might present
Hope of adventurous quest or hard assay:
And, ere the first day's circling sun is spent,
The peer is guested in an abbey gray:
Which spends much wealth in harbouring those who claim
Its shelter, warlike knight or wandering dame.

LV.

The monks and abbot to Mount Alban's peer
A goodly welcome in their house accord;
Who asked, but not before with savoury cheer
He amply had his wearied strength restored,
If in that tract, by errant cavalier,
Often adventurous quest might be explored,
In which a man might prove, by dangerous deed,
If blame or glory were his fitting meed.

LVI.

They answered, in those woods he might be sure
Many and strange adventures would be found;
But deeds, there wrought, were, like the place, obscure,
And, for the greater part, not bruited round.
"Then seek (they said) a worthier quest, secure
"Your works will not be buried underground.
"So that the glorious act achieved, as due,
"Fame may your peril and your pain pursue.

LVII.

"And if you would your warlike worth assay,
"Prepare the worthiest enterprize to hear,
"That, e'er in times of old or present day,
"Was undertaken by a cavalier.
"Our monarch's daughter needs some friendly stay,
"Now sore bested, against a puissant peer:
"Lurcanio is the doughty baron's name,
"Who would bereave her both of life and fame.

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LVIII.

" Her he before her father does pursue,
" Perchance yet more for hatred than for right;
" And vouches, to a gallery she updrew
" A lover, seen by him, at dead of night.
" Hence death by fire will be the damsel's due,
" Such is our law, unless some champion fight
" On her behalf, and, ere a month go by,
" (Nigh spent) upon the accuser prove the lie.

LIX.

" Our impious Scottish law, severe and dread,
" Wills, that a woman, whether low or high
" Her state, who takes a man into her bed,
" Except her husband, for the offence shall die.
" Nor is there hope of ransom for her head,
" Unless to her defence some warrior hie;
" And as her champion true, with spear and shield,
" Maintain her guiltless in the listed field.

LX.

" The king, sore grieving for Geneura bright,
" For such is his unhappy daughter's name,
" Proclaims by town and city, that the knight
" Who shall deliver her from death and shame,
" He to the royal damsel will unite,
" With dower, well suited to a royal dame;
" So that the valiant warrior who has stood
" In her defence, be come of gentle blood.

LXI.

" But if within a month no knight appear,
" Or coming, conquer not, the damsel dies.
" A like emprize were worthier of your spear
" Than wandering through these woods in lowly guise.
" Besides, the eternal trophy you shall rear,
" You by the deed shall gain a glorious prize,
" The sweetest flower of all the ladies fair
" That betwixt Ind and Atlas' pillars are.

LXII.

" And you with wealth and state shall guerdoned be,
" So that you evermore may live content,
" And the king's grace, if through your means he see
" His honour raised anew, now well-nigh spent.
" Besides, you by the laws of chivalry
" Are bound to venge the damsel foully shent.
" For she, whose life is by such treason sought,
" Is chaste and spotless in the common thought."

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LXIII.

Rinaldo mused awhile, and then replied,
"And must a gentle damsel die by fire,
"Because she with a lover's wish complied,
"And quenched within her arms his fond desire?
"Cursed be the law by which the dame is tried!
"Cursed he who would permit a doom so dire!
"Perish (such fate were just!) who cruel proves!
"Not she that life bestows on him who loves.

LXIV.

"Or true or false Geneura's tale of shame;
"If she her lover blessed I little heed:
"For this my praise the lady well might claim,
"If manifest were not that gentle deed.
"My every thought is turned to aid the dame.
"Grant me but one to guide my steps, and lead
"Quickly to where the foul accuser stands,
"I trust in God to loose Geneura's bands.

LXV.

"I will not vouch her guiltless in my thought,
"In fear to warrant what is false; but I
"Boldly maintain, in such an act is nought
"For which the damsel should deserve to die;
"And ween unjust, or else of wit distraught,
"Who statutes framed of such severity;
"Which, as iniquitous, should be effaced,
"And with a new and better code replaced.

LXVI.

"If like desire, and if an equal flame
"Move one and the other sex, who warmly press
"To that soft end of love (their goal the same)
"Which to the witless crowd seems rank excess;
"Say why shall woman—merit scathe or blame,
"Though lovers, one or more, she may caress;
"While man to sin with whom he will is free,
"And meets with praise. not mere impunity?

LXVII.

"By this injurious law, unequal still,
"On woman is inflicted open wrong;
"And to demonstrate it a grievous ill,
"I trust in God, which has been borne too long."
To good Rinaldo's sentence, with one will,
Deeming their sires unjust, assents the throng,
Their sires who such outrageous statute penned,
And king, who might, but does not, this amend.

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LXVIII.

When the new dawn, with streaks of red and white,
Broke in the east, and cleared the hemisphere,
Rinaldo took his steed and armour bright:
A squire that abbey furnished to the peer.
With him, for many leagues and miles, the knight
Pricked through the dismal forest dark and drear;
While they towards the Scottish city ride,
Where the poor damsel's cause is to be tried.

LXIX.

Seeking their way to shorten as they wound,
They to the wider track a path preferred;
When echoing through the gloomy forest round,
Loud lamentations nigh the road were heard.
Towards a neighbouring vale, whence came the sound
This his Bayardo, that his hackney spurred;
And viewed, between two grisly ruffians there,
A girl, who seemed at distance passing fair.

LXX.

But woe-begone and weeping was the maid
As ever damsel, dame, or wight was seen;
Hard by the barbarous twain prepared the blade,
To deluge with that damsel's blood the green.
She to delay her death awhile essayed,
Until she pity moved with mournful mien.
This when Rinaldo near approaching eyes,
He thither drives with threats and furious cries.

LXXI.

The ruffians turn their backs and take to flight
As soon as they the distant succour view,
And squat within a valley out of sight:
Nor cares the good Rinaldo to pursue.
To her approaching, sues Mount Alban's knight,
To say what on her head such evil drew;
And, to save time, commands his squire to stoop,
And take the damsel on his horse's croup.

LXXII.

And as the lady nearer he surveyed,
Her wise behaviour marked and beauty's bloom;
Though her fair countenance was all dismayed,
And by the fear of death o'erspread with gloom.
Again to know, the gentle knight essayed,
Who had prepared for her so fell a doom;
And she began to tell in humble tone
What to another canto I postpone.

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CANTO V.

ARGUMENT.

Lurcanio, by a false report abused,
Deemed by Geneura's fault his brother dead,
Weening the faithless duke, whom she refused,
Was taken by the damsel to her bed;
And her before the king and peers accused:
But to the session Ariodantes led,
Strives with his brother in disguise. In season
Rinaldo comes to venge the secret treason.

I.

Among all other animals who prey[1]
On earth, or who unite in friendly wise,
Whether they mix in peace or moody fray,
No male offends his mate. In safety hies
The she-bear, matched with hers, through forest gray:
The lioness beside the lion lies:
Wolves, male and female, live in loving cheer;
Nor gentle heifer dreads the wilful steer.

II.

What Fury, what abominable Pest
Such poison in the human heart has shed,
That still 'twixt man and wife, with rage possessed,
Injurious words and foul reproach are said?
And blows and outrage base their peace molest,
And bitter tears still wash the genial bed;
Not only watered by the tearful flood,
But often bathed by senseless ire with blood?

III.

Not simply a rank sinner, he appears
To outrage nature, and his God to dare,
Who his foul hand against a woman rears,
Or of her head would harm a single hair.
But who what drug the burning entrails sears,
Or who for her would knife or noose prepare,
No man appears to me, though such to sight
He seem, but rather some infernal sprite.

IV.

Such, and no other were those ruffians two,
Whom good Rinaldo from the damsel scared,
Conducted to these valleys out of view,
That none might wot of her so foully snared.
I ended where the damsel, fair of hue,
To tell the occasion of her scathe prepared,
To the good Paladin, who brought release;
And in conclusion thus my story piece.

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V.

"Of direr deed than ever yet was done,"[2]
The gentle dame began, "Sir cavalier,
"In Thebes, Mycene, Argos, or upon
"Other more savage soil, prepare to hear;
"And I believe, that if the circling sun
"To these our Scottish shores approach less near
"Than other land, 'tis that he would eschew
"A foul ferocious race that shocks his view.

VI.

"All times have shown that man has still pursued
"With hate, in every clime, his natural foe;
"But to deal death to those who seek our good
"Does from too ill and foul a nature flow.
"Now, that the truth be better understood,
"I shall from first to last the occasion show,
"Why in my tender years, against all right,
"Those caitiffs would have done me foul despite.

VII.

"'Tis fitting you should know, that in the spring
"Of life, I to the palace made resort;
"There served long time the daughter of the king,
"And grew with her in growth, well placed in court.
"When cruel love, my fortune envying,
"Willed I should be his follower and his sport;
"And made, beyond each Scottish lord and knight,
"Albany's duke find favour in my sight.

VIII.

"And for he seemed to cherish me above
"All mean; his love a love as ardent bred.
"We hear, indeed, and see, but do not prove
"Man's faith, nor is his bosom's purpose read.
"Believing still, and yielding to my love,
"I ceased not till I took him to my bed;
"Nor, of all chambers, in that evil hour,
"Marked I was in Geneura's priviest bower.

IX.

"Where, hoarded, she with careful privacy
"Preserved whatever she esteemed most rare;
"There many times she slept. A gallery
"From thence projected into the open air.
"Here oft I made my lover climb to me,
"And (what he was to mount) a hempen stair,
"When him I to my longing arms would call,
"From the projecting balcony let fall.

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X.

"For here my passion I as often fed
"As good Geneura's absence made me bold;
"Who with the varying season changed her bed,
"To shun the burning heat or pinching cold,
"And Albany, unseen and safely sped;
"For, fronting a dismantled street, and old,
"Was built that portion of the palace bright;
"Nor any went that way by day or night.

XI.

"So was for many days and months maintained
"By us, in secrecy, the amorous game;
"Still grew my love, and such new vigour gained,
"I in my inmost bosom felt the flame;
"And that he little loved, and deeply feigned
"Weened not, so was I blinded to my shame:
"Though, in a thousand certain signs betrayed,
"The faithless knight his base deceit bewrayed.

XII.

"After some days, of fair Geneura he
"A suitor showed himself; I cannot say
"If this began before he sighed for me,
"Or, after, of this love he made assay:
"But judge, alas! with what supremacy
"He ruled my heart, how absolute his sway!
"Since this he owned, and thought no shame to move
"Me to assist him in his second love.

XIII.

"Unlike what he bore me, he said, indeed,
"That was not true which he for her displayed:
"But so pretending love, he hoped to speed,
"And celebrate due spousals with the maid.
"He with her royal sire might well succeed,
"Were she consenting to the boon he prayed;
"For after our good king, for wealth and birth
"In all the realm, was none of equal worth.

XIV.

"Me he persuades, if through my ministry
"He the king's son-in-law elected were,
"For I must know he next the king would be
"Advanced as high, as subject could repair,
"The merit should be mine, and ever he
"So great a benefit in mind would bear;
"And he would cherish me above his bride,
"And more than every other dame beside.

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XV.

" I, who to please him was entirely bent,
" Who never could or would gainsay his will,
" Upon those days alone enjoy content,
" When I find means his wishes to fulfil:
" And snatch at all occasions which present
" A mode, his praise and merits to instil:
" And for my lover with all labour strain,
" And industry, Geneura's love to gain.

XVI.

" With all my heart, in furtherance of his suit,
" I wrought what could be done, God truly knows;
" But with Geneura this produced no fruit,
" Nor her to grace my duke could I dispose.
" For that another love had taken root
" In her, whose every fond affection flows
" Towards a gentle knight of courteous lore,
" Who sought our Scotland from a distant shore:

XVII.

" And with a brother, then right young, to stay
" In our king's court, came out of Italy;
" And there of knightly arms made such assay,
" Was none in Britain more approved than he;
" Prized by the king, who (no ignoble pay),
" Rewarding him like his nobility,
" Bestowed upon the youth, with liberal hand,
" Burghs, baronies, and castles, woods and land.

XVIII.

" Dear to the monarch, to the daughter still
" This lord was dearer, Ariodantes hight.
" Her with affection might his valour fill;
" But knowledge of his love brought more delight.
" Nor old Vesuvius, nor Sicilia's hill,
" Nor Troy-town, ever, with a blaze so bright,
" Flamed, as with all his heart, the damsel learned,
" For love of her young Ariodantes burned.

XIX.

" The passion which she bore the lord, preferred
" And loved with perfect truth and all her heart,
" Was the occasion I was still unheard;
" Nor hopeful answer would she e'er impart:
" And still the more my lover's suit I stirred,
" And to obtain his guerdon strove with art,
" Him she would censure still, and ever more
" Was strengthened in the hate she nursed before.

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XX.

" My wayward lover often I excite
" So vain and bootless an emprize to quit;
" Nor idly hope to turn her stedfast sprite,
" Too deeply with another passion smit;
" And make apparent to the Scottish knight,
" Ariodantes such a flame had lit
" In the young damsel's breast, that seas in flood
" Would not have cooled one whit her boiling blood.

XXI.

" This Polinesso many times had heard
" From me (for such the Scottish baron's name)
" Well warranted by sight as well as word,
" How ill his love was cherished by the dame.
" To see another to himself preferred
" Not only quenched the haughty warrior's flame,
" But the fond love which in his bosom burned
" Into despiteful rage and hatred turned.

XXII.

" Between Geneura and her faithful knight
" Such discord and ill will he schemed to shed,
" And put betwixt the pair such foul despite,
" No time should heal the quarrel he had bred;
" Bringing such scandal on that damsel bright,
" The stain should cleave to her, alive or dead:
" Nor, bent to wreck her on this fatal shelf,
" Counselled with me, or other but himself.

XXIII.

' Dalinda mine,' he said, his project brewed,
(Dalinda is my name) ' you needs must know,
' That from the root although the trunk be hewed,
' Successive suckers many times will grow.
' Thus my unhappy passion is renewed,
' Tenacious still of life, and buds; although
' Cut off by ill success, with new increase:
' Nor, till I compass my desire, will cease.

XXIV.

' Nor hope of pleasure this so much has wrought,
' As that to compass my design would please;
' And, if not in effect, at least in thought
' To thrive, would interpose some little ease.
' Then every time your bower by me is sought,
' When in her bed Geneura slumbers, seize
' What she puts off, and be it still your care
' To dress yourself in all her daily wear.

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XXV.

'Dispose your locks and deck yourself as she
'Goes decked; and, as you can, with cunning heed,
'Imitate her; then to the gallery
'You, furnished with the corded stair, shall speed:
'I shall ascend it in the phantasy
'That you are she, of whom you wear the weed:
'And hope, that putting on myself this cheat,
'I in short time shall quench my amorous heat.'

XXVI.

"So said the knight; and I, who was distraught,
"And all beside myself, was not aware
"That the design, in which he help besought,
"Was manifestly but too foul a snare;
"And in Geneura's clothes disguised, as taught,
"Let down (so oft I used) the corded stair.
"Nor I the traitor's foul deceit perceived,
"Until the deadly mischief was achieved.

XXVII.

"The duke, this while, to Ariodantes' ears
"Had these, or other words like these, addressed;
"(For leagued in friendship were the cavaliers,
"Till, rivals, they pursued this common quest)
'I marvel, since you are of all my peers
'He, whom I most have honoured and caressed,
'And held in high regard, and cherished still,
'You should my benefits repay so ill.

XXVIII.

'I am assured you comprehend and know
'Mine and Geneura's love, and old accord;
'And, in legitimate espousal, how
'I am about to claim her from my lord:
'Then why disturb my suit, and why bestow
'Your heart on her who offers no reward?
'By Heaven, I should respect your claim and place,
'Were your condition mine, and mine your case.'

XXIX.

'And I,' cried Ariodantes, 'marvel more'
(In answer to the Scottish lord) 'at you,
'Since I of her enamoured was, before
'That gentle damsel ever met your view;
'And know, you are assured how evermore
'We two have loved;—was never love more true—
'Are certain she alone would share my lot;
'And are as well assured she loves you not.

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XXX.

'Why have not I from you the same respect,
'To which, for friendship past, you would pretend
'From me; and I should bear you in effect,
'If your hope stood more fair to gain its end?
'No less than you, to wed her I expect;
'And if your fortunes here my wealth transcend,
'As favoured of the king as you, above
'You, am I happy in his daughter's love.'

XXXI.

'Of what a strange mistake,' (to him replied
The duke,) 'your foolish passion is the root!
'You think yourself beloved; I, on my side,
'Believe the same; this try we by the fruit.
'You of your own proceeding nothing hide,
'And I will tell the secrets of my suit:
'And let the man who proves least favoured, yield,
'Provide himself elsewhere, and quit the field.

XXXII.

'I am prepared, if such your wish, to swear
'Nothing of what is told me to reveal;
'And will that you assure me, for your share,
'You shall what I recount as well conceal.'
"Uniting in the pact, the rival pair
"Their solemn vows upon the Bible seal:
"And when they had the mutual promise plighted,
"Ariodantes first his tale recited.

XXXIII.

"Then plainly, and by simple facts averred,
"How with Geneura stood his suit, avows;
"And how, engaged by writing and by word,
"She swore she would not be another's spouse.
"How, if to him the Scottish king demurred,
"Virgin austerity she ever vows;
"And other bridal bond for aye eschewed,
"To pass her days in barren solitude.

XXXIV.

"Then added, how he hoped by worth, which he
"Had more than once avouched, with knightly brand,
"And yet might vouch, to the prosperity
"And honour of the king, and of his land,
"To please so well that monarch, as to be
"By him accounted worthy of the hand
"Of his fair child, espoused with his consent:
"Since he in this her wishes would content.

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XXXV.

"Then so concludes—'I stand upon this ground,
'Nor I intruder fear, encroaching nigh;
'Nor seek I more; 'tis here my hopes I bound;
'Nor, striving for Geneura's love, would I,
'Seek surer sign of it than what is found,
'By God allowed, in wedlock's lawful tie;
'And other suit were hopeless, am I sure,
'So excellent she is, and passing pure.'

XXXVI.

"When Ariodantes had, with honest mind,
"Told what reward he hoped should quit his pain,
"False Polinesso, who before designed
"To make Geneura hateful to her swain,
"Began—'Alas! you yet are far behind
'My hopes, and shall confess your own are vain
'And say, as I the root shall manifest
'Of my good fortune, I alone am blest.

XXXVII.

'With you Geneura feigns, nor pays nor prizes
'Your passion, which with hopes and words is fed;
'And, more than this, your foolish love despises:
'And this to me the damsel oft has said,
'Of hers I am assured; of no surmises,
'Vain, worthless words, or idle promise bred.
'And I to you the fact in trust reveal,
'Though this I should in better faith conceal.

XXXVIII.

'There passes not a month, but in that space
'Three nights, four, six, and often ten, the fair
'Receives me with that joy in her embrace,
'Which seems to second so the warmth we share.
'This you may witness, and shall judge the case;
'If empty hopes can with my bliss compare.
'Then since my happier fortune is above
'Your wishes, yield, and seek another love.'

XXXIX.

'This will I not believe,' in answer cried
"Ariodantes, 'well assured you lie,
'And that you have this string of falsehoods tied,
'To scare me from the dear emprize I try.
'But charge, so passing foul, you shall abide,
'And vouch what you have said in arms; for I
'Not only on your tale place no reliance;
'But as a traitor hurl you my defiance."

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XL.

"To him rejoined the duke, 'I ween 'twere ill
'To take the battle upon either part,
'Since surer mean our purpose may fulfil;
'And if it please, my proof I can impart.'
"Ariodantes trembled, and a chill
"Went through his inmost bones; and sick at heart,
"Had he in full believed his rival's boast,
"Would on the spot have yielded up the ghost.

XLI.

"With wounded heart, and faltering voice, pale face,[3]
"And mouth of gall, he answered, 'when I see
'Proofs of thy rare adventure, and the grace
'With which the fair Geneura honours thee,
'I promise to forego the fruitless chase
'Of one, to thee so kind, so cold to me.
'But think not that thy story shall avail,
'Unless my very eyes confirm the tale.'

XLII.

'To warn you in due time shall be my care,'
(Said Polinesso) and so went his way.
"Two nights were scarcely passed, ere his repair
"To the known bower was fixed for the assay.
"And, ready now to spring his secret snare,
"He sought his rival on the appointed day,
"And him to hide, the night ensuing, prayed
"I' the street, which none their habitation made.

XLIII.

"And to the youth a station over-right
"The balcony, to which he clambered, shows.
"Ariodantes weened, this while, the knight
"Would him to seek that hidden place dispose,
"As one well suited to his fell despite,
"And, bent to take his life, this ambush chose,
"Under the false pretence to make him see
"What seemed a sheer impossibility.

XLIV.

"To go the peer resolved, but in such guise,
"He should not be with vantage overlaid;
"And should he be assaulted by surprise,
"He need not be by fear of death dismay'd.
"He had a noble brother, bold and wise,
"First of the court in arms; and on his aid,
"Lurcanio hight, relied with better heart
"Than if ten others fought upon his part.

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XLV.

" He called him to his side, and willed him take
" His arms; and to the place at evening led:
" Yet not his secret purpose would he break:
" Nor this to him, or other would have read:
" Him a stone's throw removed he placed, and spake:
' —Come if thou hearest me cry,' the warrior said;
' But as thou lovest me (whatsoe'er befall)
' Come not and move not, brother till I call.'

XLVI.

' Doubt not' (the valiant brother said) ' but go;'
" And thither went that baron silently,
" And hid within the lonely house, and low,
" Over against my secret gallery.
" On the other side approached the fraudful foe,
" So pleased to work Geneura's infamy;
" And, while I nothing of the cheat divine,
" Beneath my bower renews the wonted sign,

XLVII.

" And I in costly robe, in which were set
" Fair stripes of gold upon a snowy ground,
" My tresses gathered in a golden net,
" Shaded with tassels of vermillion round,
" Mimicking fashions, which were only met
" In fair Geneura, at the accustomed sound,
" The gallery mount, constructed in such mode,
" As upon every side my person showed.

XLVIII.

" This while Lurcanio, either with a view
" To snares which might beset his brother's feet,
" Or with the common passion to pursue,
" And play the spy on other, where the street
" Was darkest, and its deepest shadows threw,
" Followed him softly to his dim retreat:
" And not ten paces from the knight aloof,
" Bestowed himself beneath the self same roof.

XLIX.

" Suspecting nought, I seek the balcony,
" In the same habits which I mentioned, dressed;
" As more than once or twice (still happily)
" I did before; meanwhile the goodly vest
" Was in the moonlight clearly seen, and I,
" In aspect not unlike her, in the rest
" Resembling much Geneura's shape and cheer,
" One visage well another might appear.

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L.

" So much the more, that there was ample space
" Between the palace and the ruined row:
" Hence the two brothers, posted in that place,
" Were lightly cheated by the lying show.
" Now put yourself in his unhappy case,
" And figure what the wretched lover's woe,
" When Polinesso climbed the stair, which I
" Cast down to him, and scaled the gallery.

LI.

" Arrived, my arms about his neck I throw,
" Weening that we unseen of others meet;
" And kiss his lips and face with loving show,
" As him I hitherto was wont to greet;
" And he assayed, with more than wonted glow,
" Me to caress, to mask his hollow cheat.
" Led to the shameful spectacle, aghast,
" That other, from afar, viewed all that passed.

LII.

" And fell into such fit of deep despair,
" He there resolved to die; and, to that end,
" Planted the pommel of his falchion bare
" I' the ground, its point against his breast to bend.
" Lurcanio, who with marvel by that stair,
" Saw Polinesso to my bower ascend,
" But knew not who the wight, with ready speed
" Sprang forward, when he saw his brother's deed.

LIII.

" And hindered him in that fell agony
" From turning his own hand against his breast.
" Had the good youth been later, or less nigh,
" To his assistance he had vainly pressed.
" Then, ' Wretched brother, what insanity,'
(He cried) ' your better sense has dispossessed?
' Die for a woman! rather let her kind
' Be scattered like the mist before the wind!!

LIV.

' Compass her death! 'tis well deserved; your own
' Reserve, as due to more illustrious fate.
' 'Twas well to love, before her fraud was shown,
' But she, once loved, now more deserves your hate:
' Since, witnessed by your eyes, to you is known
' A wanton of what sort you worshipped late.
' Her fault before the Scottish king to attest,
' Reserve those arms you turn against your breast.'

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LV.

"Ariodantes, so surprised, forewent,
"Joined by his brother, the design in show;
"But resolute to die, in his intent
"Was little shaken: Rising thence to go,
"He bears away a heart not simply rent,
"But dead and withered with excess of woe:
"Yet better comfort to Lurcanio feigns,
"As if the rage were spent which fired his veins.

LVI.

"The morn ensuing, without further say
"To his good brother, or to man beside,
"He from the city took his reckless way
"With deadly desperation for his guide;
"Nor, save the duke and knight, for many a day
"Was there who knew what moved the youth to ride:
"And in the palace, touching this event,
"And in the realm, was various sentiment.

LVII.

"But eight days past or more, to Scotland's court
"A traveller came, and to Geneura he
"Related tidings of disastrous sort;
"That Ariodantes perished in the sea:
"Drowned of his own free will was the report,
"No wind to blame for the calamity!
"Since from a rock, which over ocean hung,
"Into the raging waves he headlong sprung;

LVIII.

"Who said, before he reached that frowning crest,
"To me, whom he encountered by the way,
'Come with me, that your tongue may manifest,
'And what betides me to Geneura say;
'And tell her, too, the occasion of the rest,
'Which you shall witness without more delay;
'In having seen too much, the occasion lies;
'Happy had I been born without these eyes!'

LIX.

"By chance, upon a promontory we
"Were standing, overright the Irish shore;
"When, speaking thus on that high headland, he
"Plunged from a rock amid the watery roar.
"I saw him leap, and left him in the sea;
"And, hurrying thence, to you the tidings bore.
"Geneura stood amazed, her colour fled,
"And, at the fearful tale, remained half dead.

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LX.

"O God! what said, what did she, when alone,
"She on her faithful pillow layed her head!
"She beat her bosom, and she tore her gown,
"And in despite her golden tresses shed
"Repeating often, in bewildered tone,
"The last sad words which Ariodantes said;—
"That the sole source of such despair, and such
"Disaster, was that he had seen too much.

LXI.

"Wide was the rumour scattered that the peer
"Had slain himself for grief; nor was the cry
"By courtly dame, or courtly cavalier,
"Or by the monarch, heard with tearless eye.
"But, above all the rest, his brother dear
"Was whelmed with sorrow of so deep a dye,
"That, bent to follow him, he well nigh turned
"His hand against himself, like him he mourned.

LXII.

"And many times repeating in his thought,
"It was Geneura who his brother slew,
"Who was to self-destruction moved by nought
"But her ill deed, which he was doomed to view,
"So on his mind the thirst of vengeance wrought,
"And so his grief his reason overthrew;
"That he thought little, graced of each estate,
"To encounter king and people's common hate;

LXIII.

"And, when the throng was fullest in the hall,
"Stood up before the Scottish king, and said;
'Of having marred my brother's wits withal,
'Sir king, and him to his destruction led,
'Your daughter only can I guilty call:
'For in his inmost soul such sorrow bred
'The having seen her little chastity,
'He loathed existence, and preferred to die.

LXIV.

'He was her lover; and for his intent
'Was honest, this I seek not, I, to veil;
'And to deserve her by his valour meant
'Of thee, if faithful service might avail;
'But while he stood aloof, and dared but scent
'The blossoms, he beheld another scale,
'Scale the forbidden tree with happier boot,
'And bear away from him the wished-for fruit.'

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LXV.

"Then added, how into the gallery came
"Geneura, and how dropped the corded stair;
"And how into the chamber of the dame
"Had climbed a leman of that lady fair;
"Who, for disguise (he knew not hence his name),
"Had changed his habits, and concealed his hair:
"And, in conclusion, vowed that every word
"So said, he would avouch with lance and sword.

LXVI.

"You may divine how grieves the sire, distraught
"With woe, when he the accusation hears:
"As well that what he never could have thought,
"He of his daughter learns with wondering ears,
"As that he knows, if succour be not brought
"By cavalier, that in her cause appears,
"Who may upon Lurcanio prove the lie,
"He cannot choose, but doom the maid to die.

LXVII.

"I do not think our Scottish law to you
"Is yet unknown, which sentences to fire
"The miserable dame, or damsel, who
"Grants other than her wedded lord's desire.
"She dies, unless a champion, good and true,
"Arm on her side before a month expire;
"And her against the accuser base maintain
"Unmeriting such death, and free from stain.

LXVIII.

"The king has made proclaim by town and tower,
"(For he believes her wronged, his child to free)
"Her *he* shall have to wife, with ample dower,
"Who saves the royal maid from infamy.
"But each to the other looks, and to this hour
"No champion yet, 'tis said, appears: for he,
"Lurcanio, is esteemed so fierce in fight,
"It seems as he were feared of every knight.

LXIX.

"And evil Fate has willed her brother dear,
"Zerbino, is not here the foe to face;
"Since many months has roved the cavalier,
"Proving his matchless worth with spear and mace;
"For if the valiant champion were more near,
"(Such is his courage) or in any place,
"Whither in time the news might be conveyed,
"He would not fail to bear his sister aid.

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LXX.

"The king, mean time, who would the quest pursue,
"And by more certain proof than combat, try
"If the accuser's tale be false or true,
"And she deserve, or merit not, to die,
"Arrests some ladies of her retinue,
"That, as he weens, the fact can verify.
"Whence I foresaw, that if I taken were,
"Too certain risque the duke and I must share.

LXXI.

"That very night I from the palace flee,
"And to the duke repair, escaped from court;
"And, were I taken, make him plainly see
"How much it either's safety would import:
"He praised, and bade me of good courage be,
"And, for his comfort, prayed me to resort
"To a strong castle which he held hard by;
"And gave me two to bear me company.

LXXII.

"With what full proofs, sir stranger, you have heard,
"I of my love assured the Scottish peer;
"And clearly can discern, if so preferred,
"That lord was justly bound to hold me dear.
"Mark, in conclusion, what was my reward;
"The glorious meed of my great merit hear!
"And say if woman can expect to earn,
"However well she love, her love's return.

LXXIII.

"For this perfidious, foul, ungrateful man,
"At length suspicious of my faith and zeal,
"And apprehending that his wily plan,
"In course of time, I haply might reveal,
"Feigned that meanwhile the monarch's anger ran
"Too high, he would withdraw me, and conceal
"Within a fortress of his own, where I
"(Such was his real end) was doomed to die.

LXXIV.

"For secretly the duke enjoined the guide,
"Who with me through the gloomy forest went,
"The worthy guerdon of a faith so tried,
"To slay me; and had compassed his intent,
"But for your ready succour, when I cried.
"Behold! what wagers love's poor slaves content."
Thus to Rinaldo did Dalinda say,
As they together still pursued their way.

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LXXV.

Above all other fortune, to the knight
Was welcome to have found the gentle maid,
Who the whole story of Geneura bright,
And her unblemished innocence displayed;
And, if he hoped, although accused with right,
To furnish the afflicted damsel aid,
Persuaded of the calumny's disproof,
He with more courage warred in her behoof.

LXXVI.

And for St. Andrew's town, with eager speed,
Where was the king with all his family,
And where the single fight, in listed mead,
Upon his daughter's quarrel, was to be,
The good Rinaldo pricked, nor spared his steed,
Until, within an easy distance, he
Now near the city, met a squire who brought
More recent tidings than the damsel taught:

LXXVII.

That thither had repaired a stranger knight,
To combat in Geneura's quarrel bent,
With ensigns strange, not known of living wight,
Since ever close concealed the warrior went;
Nor, since he had been there, had bared to sight
His visage, aye within his helmet pent:
And that the very squire who with him came,
Swore that he knew not what the stranger's name.

LXXVIII.

Not far they ride before the walls appear,
And now before the gate their coursers stand.
To advance the sad Dalinda was in fear,
Yet followed, trusting in Rinaldo's brand.
The gate was shut, and to the porter near,
'What this implies' Rinaldo makes demand:
To him was said, the people, one and all,
Were trooped to see a fight without the wall:

LXXIX.

Beyond the city, fought upon accord,
Between Lurcanio and a stranger knight;
Where, on a spacious meadow's level sward,
The pair already had begun the fight.
The porter opened to Mount Alban's lord,
And straight behind the peer the portal hight
Rinaldo through the empty city rode,
But in a hostel first the dame bestowed:

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LXXX.

And wills that she (he will not long delay
To seek her there) till his return repose;
And quickly to the lists pursued his way,
Where the two made that fell exchange of blows,
And strove and struggled yet in bloody fray.
Lurcanio's heart with vengeful hatred glows
Against Geneura; while that other knight
As well maintains the quarrel for her right.

LXXXI.

Six knights on foot within the palisade
Stand covered with the corslet's iron case;
Beneath the Duke of Albany arrayed,
Borne on a puissant steed of noble race:
Who there, as lord high-constable obeyed,
Was keeper of the field and of the place,
And joyed Geneura's peril to espy
With swelling bosom and exulting eye.

LXXXII.

Rinaldo pierces through the parted swarm,
(So wide is felt the good Bayardo's sway,)
And he who hears the courser come in storm,
Halts not, in his desire to make him way:
Above is seen Rinaldo's lofty form,
The flower of those who mix in martial fray.
He stops his horse before the monarch's chair,
While all to hear the paladin repair.

LXXXIII.

"Dread sir," to him the good Rinaldo said,
"Let not the pair this combat longer ply;
"Since whichsoever of the two falls dead,
"Know, that you let him perish wrongfully:
"*This* thinks that he is right, and is misled,
"Vouches the false, and knows not 'tis a lie:
"Since that which brought his brother to his end,
"Moves him in causeless battle to contend.

LXXXIV.

"*That*, in pure gentleness, with little care
"If what he here maintains be wrong or right,
"Because he would preserve a maid so fair,
"Perils his person in the furious fight.
"To injured innocence I safety bear,
"And to the evil man its opposite.
"But first, for love of God, the battle stay;
"Then list, sir king, to what I shall display."

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LXXXV.

So moved the king the grave authority
Of one who seemed so worthy, by his cheer,
That he made sign the battle should not be
Further continued then with sword or spear:
To whom, together with his chivalry,
And barons of the realm and others near
Rinaldo all the treacherous plot displayed,
Which Polinesso for Geneura laid.

LXXXVI.

Next that he there in arms would testify
The truth of what he vouched, the warrior cried.
False Polinesso, called, with troubled eye,
Stood forth, but daringly the tale denied.
To him the good Rinaldo in reply;
"By deeds be now the doubtful quarrel tried."
The field was cleared, and, ready armed, the foes,
Without more let, in deadly duel close.

LXXXVII.

How was the hope to king and people dear,
The proof might show Geneura innocent!
All trust that God will make the treason clear,
And show she was accused with foul intent:
For Polinesso, greedy and severe,
And proud was held, and false and fraudulent.
So that none there, of all assembled, deemed
It marvel, if the knight such fraud had schemed.

LXXXVIII.

False Polinesso, with a mien distressed,
A pallid cheek, and heart which thickly beat,
At the third trumpet, laid his lance in rest;
As well Rinaldo spurred the knight to meet,
And levelled at his evil foeman's breast,
Eager to finish at a single heat.
Nor counter to his wish was the event;
Since through the warrior half his weapon went.

LXXXIX.

Him, through his breast, impaled upon the spear,
More than six yards beyond his horse he bore.
With speed alighted Mount Albano's peer,
And, ere he rose, unlaced the helm he wore:
But he for mercy prayed with humble cheer,
Unfit to strive in joust or warfare more:
And, before king and court, with faltering breath,
Confessed the fraud which brought him to his death

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XC.

He brings not his confession to a close,
And pangs of death the failing accents drown:
The prince, who ended saw his daughter's woes,
Redeemed from death and scorn, her virtue shown,
With more delight and rapture overflows,
Than if he, having lost his kingly crown,
Then saw it first upon his head replaced;
So that he good Rinaldo singly graced.

XCI.

And when, through his uplifted casque display'd,
Features, well known before, the king descried,
His thanks to God with lifted hands he paid,
That he had deigned such succour to provide.
That other cavalier, who bared his blade,
Unknown of all, upon Geneura's side,
And thither came from far, his aid to impart,
Looked upon all that passed, and stood apart.

XCII.

Him the good king entreated to declare
His name, or, at the least, his visage shew;
That he might grace him with such guerdon fair,
As to his good intent was justly due.
The stranger, after long and earnest prayer,
Lifted the covering casque, and bared to view
What in the ensuing canto will appear,
If you are fain the history to hear.

CANTO VI.

ARGUMENT.

Ariodantes has, a worthy meed,
With his loved bride, the fief of Albany.
Meantime Rogero, on the flying steed,
Arrives in false Alcina's empery:
There from a myrtle-tree her every deed,
A human myrtle hears, and treachery,
And thence would go; but they who first withdrew
Him from one strife, engage him in a new

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I.

WRETCHED that evil man who lives in trust
His secret sin is safe in his possession!
Since, if nought else, the air, the very dust
In which the crime is buried, makes confession[1],
And oftentimes his guilt compels the unjust,
Though sometime unarraigned in worldly session,
To be his own accuser, and bewray,
So God has willed, deeds hidden from the day.

II.

The unhappy Polinesso hopes had nursed,
Wholly his secret treason to conceal,
By taking off Dalinda, who was versed
In this, and only could the fact reveal;
And adding thus a second to his first
Offence, but hurried on the dread appeal,
Which haply he had shunned, at least deferred;
But he to self-destruction blindly spurred.

III.

And forfeited estate, and life, and love
Of friends at once, and honour, which was more.
The cavalier unknown, I said above,
Long of the king and court entreated sore,
At length the covering helmet did remove,
And showed a visage often seen before,
The cherished face of Ariodantes true,
Of late lamented weeping Scotland through;

IV.

Ariodantes, whom with tearful eye
His brother and Geneura wept as dead,
And king, and people, and nobility:
Such light his goodness and his valour shed.
The pilgrim therefore might appear to lie
In what he of the missing warrior said.
Yet was it true that from a headland, he
Had seen him plunge into the foaming sea.

V.

But, as it oft befalls despairing wight,
Who grisly Death desires till he appear;
But loathes what he had sought, on nearer sight;
So painful seems the cruel pass and drear.
Thus, in the sea engulphed, the wretched knight,
Repentant of his deed, was touched with fear;
And, matchless both for spirit and for hand,
Beat back the billows, and returned to land.

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VI.

And, now despising, as of folly bred,
The fond desire which did to death impel,
Thence, soaked and dripping wet, his way did tread,
And halted at a hermit's humble cell:
And housed within the holy father's shed,
There secretly awhile designed to dwell;
Till to his ears by rumour should be voiced,
If his Geneura sorrowed or rejoiced.

VII.

At first he heard that, through excess of woe,
The miserable damsel well-nigh died:
For so abroad the doleful tidings go,
'Twas talked of in the island, far and wide:
Far other proof than that deceitful show,
Which to his cruel grief he thought he spied!
And next against the fair Geneura heard
Lurcanio to her sire his charge preferred:

VIII.

Nor for his brother felt less enmity
Than was the love he lately bore the maid;
For he too foul, and full of cruelty,
Esteemed the deed, although for him essayed;
And, hearing after, in her jeopardy,
That none appeared to lend the damsel aid,
Because so puissant was Lurcanio's might,
All dreaded an encounter with the knight,

IX.

And that who well the youthful champion knew,
Believed he was so wary and discreet,
That, had what he related been untrue,
He never would have risked so rash a feat,
—For this the greater part the fight eschew,
Fearing in wrongful cause the knight to meet—
Ariodantes (long his doubts are weighed)
Will meet his brother in Geneura's aid.

X.

"Alas! (he said) I cannot bear to see
"Thus by my cause the royal damsel die;
"My death too bitter and too dread would be,
"Did I, before my own, her death descry:
"For still my lady, my divinity
"She is;—the light and comfort of my eye.
"Her, right or wrong, I cannot choose but shield,
"And for her safety perish in the field.

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XI.

"I know I choose the wrong, and be it so!
"And in the cause shall die: nor this would move;
"But that, alas! my death, as well I know,
"Will such a lovely dame's destruction prove.
"To death I with one only comfort go,
"That, if her Polinesso bears her love,
"To her will manifestly be displayed,
"That hitherto he moves not in her aid.

XII.

"And me, so wronged by her, the maid shall view
"Encounter death in her defence; and he,
"My brother, who such flames of discord blew,
"Shall pay the debt of vengeance due to me.
"For well I ween to make Lurcanio rue
"(Informed of the event) his cruelty,
"Who will have thought to venge me with his brand,
"And will have slain me with his very hand."

XIII.

He, having this concluded in his thought,
Made new provision of arms, steed, and shield;
Black was the vest and buckler which he bought,
Where green and yellow striped the sable field[2]:
By hazard found, with him a squire he brought,
A stranger in that country; and, concealed
(As is already told) the unhappy knight,
Against his brother came, prepared for fight.

XIV.

The issue of the event was told above;
How prince and people Ariodantes knew.
Nor less delight the Scottish king did prove
Than when the knight the accuser overthrew:
Within himself he thought that never love
In man was shown so constant and so true;
Who, though so foully wronged, prepared to stake
His life against his brother's for her sake:

XV.

And yielding to his natural inclination,
And at the suit of all his court beside,
And mostly at Rinaldo's instigation,
Assigned the youth the damsel as his bride.
Albany's duchy, now in sequestration,
Late Polinesso's, who in duel died,
Could not be forfeited in happier hour;
Since this the monarch made his daughter's dower.

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XVI.

Rinaldo for Dalinda mercy won;
Who from her fault's due punishment went free.
She, satiate of the world, (and this to shun,
The damsel so had vowed) to God will flee:
And hence, in Denmark's land, to live a nun,[3]
Straight from her native Scotland sailed the sea.
But it is time Rogero to pursue,
Who on his courser posts the welkin through.

XVII.

Although Rogero is of constant mind,
Nor from his cheek the wonted hues depart,
I ween that faster than a leaf i' the wind
Fluttered within his breast the stripling's heart.
All Europe's region he had left behind
In his swift course; and, issuing in that part.
Passed by a mighty space, the southern sound
Where great Alcides fixed the sailor's bound.[4]

XVIII.

That hyppogriph, huge fowl, and strange to sight,
Bears off the warrior with such rapid wing,
He would have distanced, in his airy flight,
The thunder-bearing bird of Æther's king:
Nor other living creature soars such height,
Him in his mighty swiftness equalling.
I scarce believe that bolt, or lightning flies,
Or darts more swiftly from the parted skies.

XIX.

When the huge bird his pinions long had plied,
In a straight line, without one stoop or bend.
He, tired of air, with sweeping wheel and wide,
Began upon an island to descend;
Like that fair region, whither, long unspied[5]
Of him, her wayward mood did long offend,
Whilom in vain, through strange and secret sluice,
Passed under sea the Virgin Arethuse.

XX.

A more delightful place, wherever hurled
Through the whole air, Rogero had not found:
And, had he ranged the universal world,
Would not have seen a lovelier in his round,
Than that, where, wheeling wide, the courser furled
His spreading wings, and lighted on the ground,
'Mid cultivated plain, delicious hill,
Moist meadow, shady bank, and crystal rill.

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XXI.

Small thickets, with the scented laurel gay,
Cedar, and orange, full of fruit and flower,
Myrtle and palm, with interwoven spray,
Pleached in mixed modes, all lovely, form a bower;
And, breaking with their shade the scorching ray
Make a cool shelter from the noontide hour.
And nightingales among those branches wing
Their flight, and safely amorous descants sing.

XXII.

Amid red roses and white lilies there,
Which the soft breezes freshen as they fly,
Secure the cony haunts, and timid hare,
And stag, with branching forehead broad and high.
These, fearless of the hunter's dart or snare,
Feed at their ease, or ruminating lie;
While, swarming in those wilds, from tuft or steep
Dun deer or nimble goat, disporting, leap.

XXIII.

When the hyppogriph above the island hung,
And had approached so nigh that landscape fair,
That, if his rider from the saddle sprung,
He might the leap with little danger dare,
Rogero lit the grass and flowers among,
But held him. lest he should remount the air;
And to a myrtle, nigh the rolling brine,
Made fast, between a bay-tree and a pine.

XXIV.

And there, close-by where rose a bubbling fount,
Begirt with fertile palm and cedar-tree,
He drops the shield, the helmet from his front
Uplifts, and, either hand from gauntlet free,
Now turning to the beach, and now the mount,
Catches the gales which blow from hill or sea,
And, with a joyous murmur, lightly stir
The lofty top of beech, or feathery fir:

XXV.

And, now, to bathe his burning lips he strains;
Now dabbles in the crystal wave, to chase
The scorching heat which rages in his veins,
Caught from the heavy corslet's burning case.
Nor is it marvel if the burden pains;
No ramble his in square or market-place!
Three thousand miles, without repose, he went,
And still, at speed, in ponderous armour pent.

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XXVI.

Meanwhile the courser by the myrtle's side,
Whom he left stabled in the cool retreat,
Started at something in the wood descried,
Scared by I know not what; and in his heat
So made the myrtle shake where he was tied,
He brought a shower of leaves about his feet;
He made the myrtle shake and foliage fall,
But, struggling, could not loose himself withal.

XXVII.

As in a stick to feed the chimney rent,
Where scanty pith ill fills the narrow sheath,
The vapour, in its little channel pent,
Struggles, tormented by the fire beneath;
And, till its prisoned fury find a vent,
Is heard to hiss and bubble, sing and seethe:
So the offended myrtle inly pined,
Groaned, murmured, and at last unclosed its rind:

XXVIII.

And hence a clear, intelligible speech[6]
Thus issued, with a melancholy sound;
"If, as thy cheer and gentle presence teach,
"Thou courteous art and good, his reign unbound,
"Release me from this monster, I beseech:
"Griefs of my own inflict sufficient wound:
"Nor need I, compassed with such ills about,
"Other new pain to plague me from without."

XXIX.

At the first sound, Rogero turns to see
Whence came the voice, and, in unused surprise,
Stands, when he finds it issues from the tree;
And swiftly to remove the courser hies.
Then, with a face suffused with crimson, he
In answer to the groaning myrtle, cries;
"Pardon! and, whatsoe'er thou art, be good,
"Spirit of man, or goddess of the wood!

XXX.

"Unweeting of the wonderous prodigy
"Of spirit, pent beneath the knotty rind,
"To your fair leaf and living body I
"Have done this scathe and outrage undesigned.
"But not the less for that, to me reply,
"What art thou, who, in rugged case confined,
"Dost live and speak? And so may never hail
"From angry heaven your gentle boughs assail!

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XXXI.

"And if I now or ever the despite
"I did thee can repair, or aid impart,
"I, by that lady dear, my promise plight,
"Who in her keeping has my better part,
"To strive with word and deed, till thou requite
"The service done with praise and grateful heart.
Rogero said; and, as he closed his suit,
That gentle myrtle shook from top to root.

XXXII.

Next drops were seen to stand upon the bark,
As juice is sweated by the sapling-spray,
New-severed, when it yields to flame and spark,
Sometime in vain kept back and held at bay.
And next the voice began; "My story dark,
"Forced by thy courteous deed, I shall display;—
"What once I was—by whom, through magic lore,
"Changed to a myrtle on the pleasant shore.

XXXIII.

"A peer of France, Astolpho was my name,[7]
"Whilom a paladin, sore feared in fight;
"Cousin I was to two of boundless fame,
"Orlando and Rinaldo. I by right
"Looked to all England's crown; my lawful claim
"After my royal father, Otho hight.
"More dames than one my beauty served to warm,
"And in conclusion wrought my single harm.

XXXIV.

"Returning from those isles, whose eastern side
"The billows of the Indian ocean beat,
"Where good Rinaldo and more knights beside
"With me were pent in dark and hollow seat,
"Thence, rescued by illustrious Brava's pride,*
"Whose prowess freed us from that dark retreat,
"Westward I fared along the sandy shores,
"On which the stormy north his fury pours.

XXXV.

"Pursuing thus our rugged journey, we
"Came (such our evil doom) upon the strand,
"Where stood a mansion seated by the sea:
"Puissant Alcina owned the house and land.
"We found her, where, without her dwelling, she
"Had taken on the beach her lonely stand;
"And though nor hook nor sweeping net she bore,
"What fish she willed, at pleasure drew to shore.

* Orlando.

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XXXVI.

" Thither swift dolphins gambol, inly stirred,
" And open-mouthed the cumbrous tunnies leap;
" Thither the seal or porpus' wallowing herd
" Troop at her bidding, roused from lazy sleep;
" Raven-fish, salmon, salpouth, at her word,
" And mullet hurry through the briny deep.
" With monstrous backs above the water, sail
" Ork, physeter, sea-serpent, shark, and whale.[8]

XXXVII.

" There we behold a mighty whale, of size[9]
" The hugest yet in any waters seen:
" More than eleven paces, to our eyes,
" His back appears above the surface green:
" And (for still firm and motionless he lies,
" And such the distance his two ends between)
" We all are cheated by the floating pile,
" And idly take the monster for an isle.

XXXVIII.

" Alcina made the ready fish obey
" By simple words and by mere magic lore:
" Born with Morgana[10]—but I cannot say
" If at one birth, or after or before.
" As soon as seen, my aspect pleased the fay;
" Who showed it in the countenance she wore:
" Then wrought with art, and compassed her intent,
" To part me from the friends with whom I went.

XXXIX.

" She came towards us with a cheerful face,
" With graceful gestures, and a courteous air,
" And said; 'so you my lodging please to grace,
' Sir cavalier, and will with me repair,
' You shall behold the wonders of my chace,
' And note the different sorts of fish I snare;
' Shaggy or smooth, or clad in scales of light,
' And more in number than the stars of night:

XL.

' And would you hear a mermaid sing so sweet,
' That the rude sea grows civil at her song,
' Wont at this hour her music to repeat,
(With that she showed the monster huge and long
—I said it seemed an island—as her seat)
' Pass with me where she sings the shoals among.'
" I, that was always wilful, at her wish,
" I now lament my rashness, climb the fish.

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XLI.

"To Dudon and Rinaldo's signal blind,
"I go, who warn me to misdoubt the fay
"With laughing face Alcina mounts behind,
"Leaving the other two beside the bay.
"The obedient fish performs the task assigned,
"And through the yielding water works his way.
"Repentant of my deed. I curse the snare,
"Too far from land my folly to repair.

XLII.

"To aid me swam Mount Alban's cavalier,*
"And was nigh drowned amid the waves that rise;
"For a south-wind sprang up that, far and near,
"Covered with sudden darkness seas and skies.
"I know not after what befel the peer:
"This while Alcina to console me tries,
"And all that day, and night which followed, me
"Detained upon that monster in mid-sea,

XLIII.

"Till to this isle we drifted with the morn,
"Of which Alcina keeps a mighty share;
"By that usurper from a sister torn,
"Who was her father's universal heir:
"For that she only was in wedlock born,
"And for those other two false sisters were
"(So well instructed in the story, said
"One who rehearsed the tale) in incest bred.

XLIV.

"As these are practised in iniquity,
"And full of every vice and evil art;
"So she, who ever lives in chastity,
"Wisely on better things has set her heart.
"Hence, leagued against her, in conspiracy,
"Those others are, to drive her from her part:
"And more than once their armies have o'errun
"Her realm, and towns above a hundred won.

XLV.

"Nor at this hour a single span of ground
"Would Logistilla (such her name) command,
"But that a mountain here, and there a sound,
"Protects the remnant from the invading band.
"'Tis thus the mountain and the river bound
"England, and part it from the Scottish land.
"Yet will the sisters give their foe no rest,
"Till of her scanty remnant dispossest.

* Rinaldo.

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XLVI.

"Because in wickedness and vice were bred
"The pair, as chaste and good they loath the dame.
"But, to return to what I lately said,
"And to relate how I a plant became;
"Me, full of love, the kind Alcina fed
"With full delights; nor I a weaker flame
"For her, within my burning heart did bear,
"Beholding her so courteous and so fair.

XLVII.

"Clasped in her dainty limbs, and lapt in pleasure,
"I weened that I each separate good had won,
"Which to mankind is dealt in different measure,
"Little or more to some, and much to none.
"I evermore contemplated my treasure,
"Nor France nor aught beside I thought upon:
"In her my every fancy, every hope
"Centered and ended as their common scope.

XLVIII.

"By her I was as much beloved, or more;
"Nor did Alcina now for other care;
"She left her every lover; for before,
"Others, in truth, the fairy's love did share:
"I was her close adviser evermore;
"And served by her, where they commanded were.
"With me she counselled, and to me referred;
"Nor, night nor day, to other spake a word.

XLIX.

"Why touch my wounds, to aggravate my ill,
"And that, alas! without the hope of cure?
"Why thus the good possessed remember still,
"Amid the cruel penance I endure?
"When kindest I believed Alcina's will,
"And fondly deemed my happiness secure,
"From me the heart she gave, the fay withdrew,
"And yielded all her soul to love more new.

L.

"Late I discerned her light and fickle bent,
"Still loving and unloving at a heat:
"Two months, I reigned not more, no sooner spent,
"Than a new paramour assumed my seat;
"And me, with scorn, she doomed to banishment,
"From her fair grace cast out. 'Tis then I weet
"I share a thousand lovers' fate, whom she
"Had to like pass reduced, all wrongfully.

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Pyrame.

Thisbé.

Release of Olympia

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LI.

"And these, because they should not scatter bruits,
"Roaming the world, of her lascivious ways,
"She, up and down the fruitful soil, transmutes
"To olive, palm, or cedar, firs or bays.
"These, as you see me changed, Alcina roots;
"While this transformed into a monster strays;
"Another melts into a liquid rill;
"As suits that haughty fairy's wanton will.

LII.

"Thou, too, that to this fatal isle art led
"By way unwonted and till now unknown,
"That some possessor of the fairy's bed
"May be for thee transformed to wave or stone,
"Thou shalt, with more than mortal pleasures fed,
"Have from Alcina seigniory and throne;
"But shalt be sure to join the common flock,
"Transformed to beast or fountain, plant or rock.

LIII.

"I willingly to thee this truth impart,
"Not that I hope with profit to advise:
"Yet 'twill be better, that informed, in part,
"Of her false ways, she harm not by surprise.
"Perhaps, as faces differ, and in art
"And wit of man an equal difference lies,
"Thou may'st some remedy perchance apply
"To the ill, which thousand others could not fly."

LIV.

The good Rogero, who from Fame had learned
That he was cousin to the dame he wooed,
Lamented much the sad Astolpho, turned
From his true form, to barren plant and rude:
And for her love, for whom so sore he burned,
Would gladly serve the stripling if he cou'd:
But, witless how to give the wished relief,
Might but console the unhappy warrior's grief.

LV.

As best he could, he strove to soothe his pain;
Then asked him, if to Logistil's retreat
Were passage, whether over hill or plain;
That he might so eschew Alcina's seat.
—'There was a way,' the myrtle said again,
—'But rough with stones, and rugged to the feet—
'If he, some little further to the right,
'Would scale the Alpine mountain's very height:

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LVI.

'But that he must not think he shall pursue
'The intended journey far; since by the way
'He will encounter with a frequent crew,
'And fierce, who serve as rampart to the fay,
'That block the road against the stranger, who
'Would break her bounds, and the deserter stay.'
Rogero thanked the tree for all, and taught,
Departed thence with full instructions fraught.

LVII.

The courser from the myrtle he untied,
And by the bridle led behind him still;
Nor would he, as before, the horse bestride,
Lest he should bear him off against his will:
He mused this while how safely he might find
A passage to the land of Logistil;
Firm in his purpose every nerve to strain,
Lest empire over him Alcina gain.

LVIII.

He to remount the steed, and through the air
To spur him to a new career again
Now thought; but doubted next, in fear to fare
Worse on the courser, restive to the rein.
"No, I will win by force the mountain-stair,"
Rogero said; (but the resolve was vain)
Nor by the beach two miles his way pursued,
Ere he Alcina's lovely city viewed.

LIX.

A lofty wall at distance meets his eye
Which girds a spacious town within its bound;
It seems as if its summit touched the sky,
And all appears like gold from top to ground.
Here some one says it is but alchemy
—And haply his opinion is unsound—
And haply he more wittily divines:
For me; I deem it gold because it shines.

LX.

When he was nigh the city-walls, so bright,
The world has not their equal, he the straight
And spacious way deserts, the way which dight
Across the plain, conducted to the gate;
And by that safer road upon the right,
Strains now against the mountain; but, in wait,
Encounters soon the crowd of evil foes,
Who furiously the Child's advance oppose.

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LXI.

Was never yet beheld a stranger band,[11]
Of mien more hideous, or more monstrous shape.
Formed downwards from the neck like men, he scanned
Some with the head of cat, and some of ape;
With hoof of goat that other stamped the sand;
While some seemed centaurs, quick in fight and rape;
Naked, or mantled in outlandish skin,
These doting sires, those striplings bold in sin.

LXII.

This gallops on a horse without a bit;
This backs the sluggish ass, or bullock slow;
These mounted on the croup of centaur sit:
Those perched on eagle, crane, or estridge, go.
Some male, some female, some hermaphrodit',
These drain the cup and those the bugle blow.
One bore a corded ladder, one a hook
One a dull file, or bar of iron shook.

LXIII.

The captain of this crew, which blocked the road,
Appeared, with monstrous paunch and bloated face;
Who a slow tortoise for a horse bestrode,
That passing sluggishly with him did pace:
Down looked, some here, some there, sustained the load,
For he was drunk, and kept him in his place.
Some wipe his brows and chin from sweat which ran,
And others with their vests his visage fan.

LXIV.

One, with a human shape and feet, his crest,
Fashioned like hound, in neck and ears and head,
Bayed at the gallant Child with angry quest,
To turn him to the city whence he fled.
"That will I never, while of strength possessed
"To brandish this," the good Rogero said:
With that his trenchant faulchion he displayed,
And pointed at him full the naked blade.

LXV.

That monster would have smote him with a spear,
But swiftly at his foe Rogero sprung,
Thrust at his paunch, and drove his faulchion sheer
Through his pierced back a palm; his buckler flung
Before him, and next sallied there and here:
But all too numerous was the wicked throng.
Now grappled from behind, now punched before,
He stands, and plies the crowd with warfare sore.

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LXVI.

One to the teeth, another to the breast,
Of that foul race he cleft; since no one steeled
In mail, his brows with covering helmet dressed,
Or fought, secured by corslet or by shield;
Yet is he so upon all quarters pressed,
That it would need the Child, to clear the field,
And to keep off the wicked crew which swarms,
More than Briareus' hundred hands and arms.

LXVII.

If he had thought the magic shield to show,
(I speak of that the necromancer bore,
Which dazed the sight of the astonished foe,
Left at his saddle by the wizard Moor)
That hideous band, in sudden overthrow,
Blinded by this, had sunk the knight before.
But haply he despised such mean as vile,
And would prevail by valour, not by guile.

LXVIII.

This as it may: the child would meet his fate,
Ere by so vile a band be prisoner led;
When, lo! forth-issuing from the city's gate,
Whose wall appeared like shining gold I said,
Two youthful dames, not born in low estate,
If measured by their mien and garb, nor bred
By swain, in early wants and troubles versed;
But amid princely joys in palace nursed!

LXIX.

On unicorn was seated either fair,
A beast than spotless ermine yet more white;
So lovely were the damsels, and so rare
Their garb, and with such graceful fashion dight,
That he who closely viewed the youthful pair,
Would need a surer sense than mortal sight,
To judge between the two. With such a mien
Embodied GRACE and BEAUTY would be seen.

LXX.

Into the mead rode this and the other dame,
Where the foul crew opposed the Child's retreat.
The rabble scattered as the ladies came,
Who with extended hand the warrior greet.
He, with a kindling visage, red with shame,
Thanked the two damsels for their gentle feat;
And was content upon their will to wait,
With them returning to that golden gate.

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LXXI.

Above, a cornice round the gateway goes,
Somedeal projecting from the colonnade,
In which is not a single part but glows,
With rarest gems of India overlaid.
Propp'd at four points, the portal did repose
On columns of one solid diamond made.
Whether what met the eye was false or true,
Was never sight more fair or glad to view.

LXXII.

Upon the sill and through the columns there,
Ran young and wanton girls, in frolic sport;
Who haply yet would have appeared more fair,
Had they observed a woman's fitting port.
All are arrayed in green,[12] and garlands wear
Of the fresh leaf. Him these in courteous sort,
With many proffers and fair mien entice,
And welcome to this opening Paradise:

LXXIII.

For so with reason I this place may call,
Where, it is my belief, that Love had birth;
Where life is spent in festive game and ball,
And still the passing moments fleet in mirth.
Here hoary-headed Thought ne'er comes at all,
Nor finds a place in any bosom. Dearth,
Nor yet Discomfort, never enter here,
Where Plenty fills her horn throughout the year.

LXXIV.

Here, where with jovial and unclouded brow,
Glad April seems to wear a constant smile,
Troop boys and damsels: One, where fountains flow,
On the green margin sings in dulcet style;
Others, the hill or tufted tree below,
In dance, or no mean sport the hours beguile.
While this, who shuns the revellers' noisy cheer,
Tells his love sorrows in his comrade's ear.

LXXV.

Above the laurel and the pine-tree's height,
Through the tall beech and shaggy fir-tree's spray,
Sport little loves, with desultory flight:
These, at their conquests made, rejoiced and gay:
These, with the well-directed shaft, take sight
At hearts, and those spread nets to catch their prey:
One wets his arrows in the brook which winds,
And one on whirling stone the weapon grinds.

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LXXVI.

To good Rogéro here was brought a steed,
Puissant and nimble, all of sorel hue;
Who was caparisoned with costly weed,
Broidered with gold, and jewels bright to view.
That other winged horse, which, at his need,
Obedient to the Moorish wizard flew,
The friendly damsels to a youth consigned,
Who led him at a slower pace behind.

LXXVII.

That kindly pair who, by the wicked band
Offended late, had saved the youthful knight;
The wicked crew, that did the Child withstand,
When he the road had taken on his right,
Exclaimed, "Fair sir, your works already scanned
"By us, who are instructed of your might,
"Embolden us, in our behalf, to pray
"You will the prowess of your arm assay.

LXXVIII.

"We soon shall reach a bottom which divides
"The plain into two parts: A cruel dame
"A bridge maintains, which there a stream bestrides,
"Eriphila the savage beldam's name;
"Who cheats, and robs, and scathes, whoever rides
"To the other shore, a giantess in frame;
"Who has long poisonous teeth her prey to tear,
"And scratches with her talons like a bear.

LXXIX.

"Besides that she infests the public way,
"Which else were free; she often ranging through
"All this fair garden, puts in disarray
"This thing or that. Of the assassin crew
"That people who without the portal gay,
"Lately with brutal rage assaulted you,
"Many her sons, the whole her followers call,
"As greedy and inhospitable all."

LXXX.

"For you not only her I would assail,
"But do a hundred battles, well content;
"Then of my person, where it may avail,
"Dispose (Rogero said) to your intent.
"Silver and land to conquer, plate or mail
"I wear not, I, in warlike cuirass pent;
"But to afford my aid to others due;
"And, most of all, to beauteous dames like you."

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LXXXI.

Their grateful thanks the ladies, worthily
Bestowed on such a valiant champion, paid;
They talking thus the bridge and river see,
And at her post the haughty dame arraid
(Sapphire and emerald decked the panoply)
In arms of gold: but I awhile delay
Till other strain the issue of the fray.

CANTO VII.

ARGUMENT.

Rogero, as directed by the pair,
The giantess Eriphila o'erthrows.
That done, he to Alcina's labyrinth, where
More than one knight is tied and prisoned, goes.
To him Melissa sage the secret snare,
And remedy for that grave evil shows.
Whence he, by her advised, with downcast eye,
And full of shame, forthwith resolves to fly.

I.

The traveller, he, whom sea or mountain sunder[1]
From his own country, sees things strange and new;
That the misjudging vulgar, which lies under
The mist of ignorance, esteems untrue:
Rejecting whatsoever is a wonder,
Unless 'tis palpable and plain to view:
Hence inexperience, as I know full well,
Will yield small credence to the tale I tell.

II.

But be this great or small, I know not why
The rabble's silly judgement I should fear,
Convinced *you* will not think the tale a lie,
In whom the light of reason shines so clear.
And hence to you it is I only try
The fruit of my fatigues to render dear.
I ended where Eriphila in guard
Of bridge and stream was seen, the passage barred.

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III.

Of finest metal was her armour bright,
With gems of many colours overspread,
The tawny jacinth,[3] yellow chrysolite,
The emerald green of hue, and ruby red.
Mounted, but not on palfrey, for the fight:
In place of that, she on a wolf had sped,
Sped on a wolf towards the pass; and rode
On sell, that rich beyond all custom showed.

IV.

No larger wolf, I ween, Apulia roams;[3]
More huge than bull; unguided by her hand:
Although upon no bit the monster foams,
Docile, I know not why, to her command
The accursed Plague, arrayed in surcoat, comes
Above her arms, in colour like the sand;
That, saving in its dye, was of the sort
Which bishops and which prelates wear at court.[4]

V.

The giantess's crest and shield appear,
For ensign, decked with swoln and poisonous toad.
Her the two damsels to the cavalier
Before the bridge, prepared for battle, showed,
Threatening, as wont to some, with levelled spear,
To do the warrior scorn and bar the road.
Bidding him turn, she to Rogero cries;
A lance he takes, and threats her and defies.[5]

VI.

As quick and daring, the gigantic Pest
Spurred her wolf, seated well for that dread game:
In mid career she laid her lance in rest,
And made earth quake beneath her as she came;
Yet at the encounter fierce the champaign pressed,
For underneath the casque, with stedfast aim,
So hard Rogero smote her, that he bore
The beldam backward six good yards and more:

VII.

And came already with his lifted blade,
Drawn for that end, to take her haughty head;
To him an easy task; for she was laid
Among the grass and flowers, like one that's dead.
But, "'Tis enough that she is vanquished," said
The pair: "no further press thy vengeance dread.
"Sheathe, courteous cavalier, thy sword anew:[6]
"Pass we the river, and our way pursue."

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VIII.

Along the path, which through a forest lay,
Roughish and somedeal ill to beat, they went.
Besides that strait and stony was the way,
This, nigh directly, scaled a hill's ascent.
But, when arrived upon the summit, they
Issued upon a mead of vast extent;
And a more pleasant palace on that green
Beheld, and brighter than was ever seen.

IX.

To meet the child, Alcina, fair of hue,[7]
Advanced some way beyond the outer gate;
And, girded by a gay and courtly crew,
Rogero there received in lordly state:
While all the rest to him such honour do,
And on the knight with such deep reverence wait,
They could not have displayed more zeal and love,
Had Jove descended from the choirs above.

X.

Not so much does the palace, fair to see,
In riches other princely domes excel,
As that the gentlest, fairest, company
Which the whole world contains, within it dwell:
Of either sex, with small variety
Between, in youth and beauty matched as well:
The fay alone exceeds the rest as far
As the bright sun outshines each lesser star.

XI.

Her shape is of such perfect symmetry,[8]
As best to feign the industrious painter knows,
With long and knotted tresses; to the eye
Not yellow gold with brighter lustre glows.
Upon her tender cheek the mingled dye
Is scattered, of the lily and the rose.
Like ivory smooth, the forehead gay and round
Fills up the space, and forms a fitting bound.

XII.

Two black and slender arches rise above
Two clear black eyes, say suns of radiant light;
Which ever softly beam and slowly move;
Round these appears to sport in frolic flight,
Hence scattering all his shafts, the little Love,
And seems to plunder hearts in open sight.
Thence, through mid visage, does the nose descend,
Where Envy finds not blemish to amend.

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XIII.

As if between two vales, which softly curl,
The mouth with vermeil tint is seen to glow:
Within are strung two rows of orient pearl,
Which her delicious lips shut up or show.
Of force to melt the heart of any churl,
However rude, hence courteous accents flow;
And here that gentle smile receives its birth,
Which opes at will a paradise on earth.

XIV.

Like milk the bosom, and the neck of snow;
Round is the neck, and full and large the breast;
Where, fresh and firm, two ivory apples grow,
Which rise and fall, as, to the margin pressed
By pleasant breeze, the billows come and go.
Not prying Argus could discern the rest.
Yet might the observing eye of things concealed
Conjecture safely, from the charms revealed.

XV.

To all her arms a just proportion bear,
And a white hand is oftentimes descried,
Which narrow is, and somedeal long; and where
No knot appears, nor vein is signified.
For finish of that stately shape and rare,
A foot, neat, short, and round, beneath is spied.
Angelic visions, creatures of the sky,
Concealed beneath no covering veil can lie.

XVI.

A springe is planted in Rogero's way,
On all sides did she speak, smile, sing, or move;
No wonder then the stripling was her prey,
Who in the fairy saw such show of love.
With him the guilt and falsehood little weigh,
Of which the offended myrtle told above.
Nor will he think that perfidy and guile
Can be united with so sweet a smile.

XVII.

No! he could now believe, by magic art,
Astolpho well transformed upon the plain,
For punishment of foul ungrateful heart,
And haply meriting severer pain.
And, as for all he heard him late impart,
'Twas prompted by revenge, 'twas false and vain.
By hate and malice was the sufferer stung,
To blame and wound the fay with slanderous tongue.

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XVIII.

The beauteous lady whom he loved so well
Is newly banished from his altered breast;
For (such the magic of Alcina's spell)
She every ancient passion dispossessed:
And in his bosom, there alone to dwell,
The image of her love and self impressed.
So witched, Rogero sure some grace deserves,
If from his faith his frail affection swerves.

XIX.

At board lyre, lute and harp of tuneful string,
And other sounds, in mixed diversity,
Made, round about, the joyous palace ring,
With glorious concert and sweet harmony.
Nor lacked there well-accorded voice to sing
Of love, its passion and its ecstasy;
Nor who, with rare inventions, choicely versed,
Delightful fiction to the guests rehearsed.

XX.

What table, spread by whatsoever heir
Of Ninus, though triumphant were the board,
Or what more famous and more costly, where[9]
Cleopatra feasted with the Latian lord,
Could with this banquet's matchless joys compare,
By the fond fairy for Rogero stored?
I think not such a feast is spread above,
Where Ganymede presents the cup to Jove.

XXI.

They form a ring, the board and festive cheer[10]
Removed, and sitting, play a merry game:
Each asks, still whispering in a neighbour's ear,
What secret pleases best; to knight and dame
A fair occasion, without let or fear,
Their love, unheard of any, to proclaim.
And in conclusion the two lovers plight
Their word, to meet together on that night.

XXII.

Soon, and much sooner than their wont, was ended
The game at which the palace inmates play:
When pages on the troop with torches tended,
And with their radiance chased the night away.
To seek his bed the paladin ascended,
Girt with that goodly squadron, in a gay
And airy bower, appointed for his rest,
Mid all the others chosen as the best.

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XXIII.

And when of comfits and of cordial wine[11]
A fitting proffer has been made anew,
The guests their bodies reverently incline,
And to their bowers depart the courtly crew.
He upon perfumed sheets, whose texture fine
Seemed of Arachne's loom, his body threw:
Hearkening this while with still attentive ears,
If he the coming of the lady hears.

XXIV.

At every movement heard on distant floor,
Hoping 'twas her, Rogero raised his head:
He thinks he hears; but it is heard no more,
Then sighs at his mistake: ofttimes from bed
He issued, and undid his chamber door,
And peeped abroad, but still no better sped;
And cursed a thousand times the hour that she
So long retarded his felicity.

XXV.

"Yes, now she comes," the stripling often said,
And reckoned up the paces, as he lay,
Which from her bower were haply to be made
To that where he was waiting for the fay.
These thoughts, and other thoughts as vain, he weighed
Before she came, and, restless at her stay,
Often believed some hinderance, yet unscanned,
Might interpose between the fruit and hand.

XXVI.

At length, when dropping sweets the costly fay
Had put some end to her perfumery,
The time now come she need no more delay,
Since all was hushed within the palace, she
Stole from her bower alone, through secret way,
And passed towards the chamber silently,
Where on his couch the youthful cavalier
Lay, with a heart long torn by Hope and Fear.

XXVII.

When the successor of Astolpho spies
Those smiling stars above him, at the sight
A flame, like that of kindled sulphur, flies
Through his full veins, as ravished by delight
Out of himself; and now up to the eyes
Plunged in a sea of bliss, he swims outright.
He leaps from bed and folds her to his breast,
Nor waits until the lady be undressed;

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XXVIII.

Though but in a light sendal clad,[12] that she
Wore in the place of farthingale or gown;
Which o'er a shift of finest quality,
And white, about her limbs the fay had thrown:
The mantle yielded at his touch, as he
Embraced her, and that veil remained alone,
Which upon every side the damsel shows,
More than clear glass the lily or the rose.

XXIX.

The plant no closer does the ivy clip,
With whose green boughs its stem is interlaced,
Than those fond lovers, each from either's lip
The balmy breath collecting, lie embraced:
Rich perfume this, whose like no seed or slip
Bears in sweet Indian or Sabæan waste;
While so to speak their joys is either fixed,
That oftentimes those meeting lips are mixed.

XXX.

These things were carried closely by the dame
And youth, or if surmised, were never bruited;
For silence seldom was a cause for blame,
But oftener as a virtue well reputed.
By those shrewd courtiers, conscious of his claim,
Rogero is with proffers fair saluted:
Worshipped of all those inmates, who fulfil
In this the enamoured fay, Alcina's will.

XXXI.

No pleasure is omitted there; since they
Alike are prisoners in Love's magic hall.
They change their raiment twice or thrice a day,
Now for this use, and now at other call.
'Tis often feast, and always holiday;
'Tis wrestling, tourney, pageant, bath, and ball
Now underneath a hill by fountain cast,
They read the amorous lays of ages past:

XXXII.

Now by glad hill, or through the shady dale,
They hunt the fearful hare, and now they flush
With busy dog, sagacious of the trail,
Wild pheasant from the stubble-field or bush.
Now where green junipers perfume the gale,
Suspend the snare, or lime the fluttering thrush:[13]
And casting now for fish, with net or hook,
Disturb their secret haunts in pleasant brook.

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XXXIII.

Rogero revels there, in like delight,
While Charles and Agramant are troubled sore.
But not for him their story will I slight,
Nor Bradamant forget; who evermore,
Mid toilsome pain and care, her cherished knight,
Ravished from her, did many a day deplore;
Whom by unwonted ways, transported through
Mid air, the damsel saw, nor whither knew.

XXXIV.

Of her I speak before the royal pair,
Who many days pursued her search in vain;
By shadowy wood, or over champaign bare,
By farm and city, and by hill and plain;
But seeks her cherished friend with fruitless care,
Divided by such space of land and main:
Often she goes among the Paynim spears,
Yet never aught of her Rogero hears.

XXXV.

Of hundreds questioned, upon every side,
Each day, no answer ever gives content.
She roams from post to post, and far and wide
Searches pavilion, lodging, booth, or tent,
And this, mid foot or horsemen, unespied,
May safely do, without impediment,
Thanks to the ring, whose more than mortal aid,
When in her mouth, conceals the vanished maid.

XXXVI.

She cannot, will not, think that he is dead;
Because the wreck of such a noble knight
Would, from Hydaspes' distant waves have spread,
To where the sun descends with westering light.
She knows not what to think, nor whither sped,
He roams in earth or air; yet, hapless wight,
Him ever seeks, and for attendant train
Has sobs and sighs, and every bitter pain.

XXXVII.

At length to find the wondrous cave she thought,
Where the prophetic bones of Merlin lie,
And there lament herself until she wrought
Upon the pitying marble to reply;
For thence, if yet he lived would she be taught,
Or this glad life to hard necessity
Had yielded up; and, when she was possessed
Of the seer's councils, would pursue the best.

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XXXVIII.

With this intention, Bradamant her way
Directed thither, where in Poictier's wood
The vocal tomb, containing Merlin's clay,
Concealed in Alpine place and savage, stood.
But that enchantress sage, who night and day
Thought of the damsel, watchful for her good,
She, I repeat, who taught her what should be
In that fair grotto her posterity;

XXXIX.

She who preserved her with protecting care,
That same enchantress, still benign and wise,
Who, knowing she a matchless race should bear
Of men, or rather semi-deities,
Spies daily what her thoughts and actions are,
And lots for her each day, divining, tries;[14]—
She all Rogero's fortune knew, how freed;
Then borne to India by the griffin-steed:

XL.

Him on that courser plainly she had eyed,
Who would not the controlling rein obey;
When, severed by such interval, he hied,
Borne through the perilous, unwonted way:
And knew that he sport, dance, and banquet plied,
And lapt in idleness and pleasure lay;
Nor memory of his lord nor of the dame,
Once loved so well, preserved, nor of his fame.

XLI.

And thus such gentle knight ingloriously
Would have consumed his fairest years and best
In long inaction, afterwards to be,
Body and soul, destroyed; and *that*, possessed
Alone by us in perpetuity,
That flower, whose sweets outlive the fragile rest
Which quickens man when he in earth is laid,
Would have been plucked or severed in the blade.

XLII.

But that enchantress kind, who with more care
Than for himself he watched, still kept the knight,
Designed to drag him, by rough road and bare,
Towards true virtue, in his own despite;
As often cunning leech will burn and pare
The flesh, and poisonous drug employ aright:
Who, though at first his cruel art offend,
Is thanked, since he preserves us in the end.

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XLIII.

She, not like old Atlantes, rendered blind
By the great love she to the stripling bore,
Set not on gifting him with life her mind,
As was the scope of that enchanter hoar;
Who, reckless all of fame and praise declined,
Wished length of days to his Rogero more
Than that, to win a world's applause, the peer
Should of his joyous life forego one year.

XLIV.

By him he to Alcina's isle had been
Dispatched, that in her palace he might dwell,
Forgetting arms; and, as enchanter seen
In magic and the use of every spell,
The heart had fastened of that fairy-queen,
Enamoured of the gentle youth, so well,
That she the knot would never disengage,
Though he should live to more than Nestor's age.

XLV.

Returning now to her that well foreknew
Whatever was to come to pass, I say
She thither did her journey straight pursue,
Where she met Aymon's daughter by the way
Forlorn and wandering: Bradamant at view
Of her enchantress, erst to grief a prey,
Changes it all to hope: the other tells
That with Alcina her Rogero dwells.

XLVI.

Nigh dead the maid remains, in piteous guise,
Hearing of him so far removed, and more
Grieves that she danger to her love descries,
Save this some strong and speedy cure restore.
But her the enchantress comforts, and applies
A salve where it was needed most, and swore
That few short days should pass before anew
Rogero should return to glad her view.

XLVII.

"Since thou, an antidote to sorcery,
"Lady (she said), the virtuous ring dost wear,
"I have no doubt if to yon island I
"This, where thine every good is hidden, bear,
"To foil Alcina's wiles and witchery,
"And thence to bring thee back thy cherished care.
"This evening, early, will I hence away,
"And be in India by the break of day."

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XLVIII.

And told to her, the tale continuing,
The mode which she was purposed to employ,
From that effeminate, soft realm to bring
Back into warlike France the cherished boy.
Bradamant from her finger slipt the ring,
Nor this alone would have bestowed with joy;
But heart and life would at her feet have laid,
If she had deemed they could Rogero aid.

XLIX.

Giving the ring, her cause she recommends
To her, and recommends Rogero more.
Countless salutes by her the damsel sends,
Then of Provence, departing seeks the shore.
The enchantress to another quarter wends;
And, for the execution of her lore,
Conjures, that eve, a palfrey, by her art,
With one foot red, black every other part.

L.

Some Farfarello, or Alchino he,[15]
I think, whom in that form she raised from hell;
And with loose hair, dishevelled horribly,
Ungirt and barefoot, mounted in the sell.
But, with wise caution, from her finger she
Withdrew the ring, lest it should mar the spell:
And then by him was with such swiftness born,
She in Alcina's isle arived at morn.

LI.

Herself she changed with wonderful disguise,
Adding a palm of stature to her height;
And made her limbs of a proportioned size;
And of the very measure seemed to sight,
As was, she deemed, the necromancer wise,
Who with such care had reared the youthful knight.
With long-descending beard she clothed her chin,
And wrinkled o'er her front and other skin.

LII.

To imitate his speech, and face, and cheer,
She knew so well, that, by the youth descried,
She might the sage Atlantes' self appear;
Next hid, and watched so long, that she espied
Upon a day (rare chance) the cavalier
At length detached from his Alcina's side:
For still, in motion or at rest, the fay
Ill bore the youth should be an hour away.

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LIII.

Alone she finds him, fitting well her will,
As he enjoys the pure and morning air
Beside a brook, which trickled from a hill,
Streaming towards a limpid lake and fair.
His fine, soft garments, wove with cunning skill,
All over, ease and wantonness declare;
These with her hand, such subtle toil well taught,
For him in silk and gold Alcina wrought.

LIV.

About the stripling's neck, a splendid string
Of gems, descending to mid-breast, is wound;
On each once manly arm, now glittering
With the bright hoop, a bracelet fair is bound.[16]
Pierced with a golden wire, in form of ring,
Is either ear; and from the yellow round
Depend two precious pearls; not such the coast
Of Araby or sumptuous India boast.

LV.

Crisped into comely ringlets was his hair,
Wet with the costliest odours and the best;
And soft and amorous all his gestures were,
Like one who does Valentian lady's hest.[17]
In him, beside his name, was nothing fair,
And more than half corrupted all the rest.
So was Rogero found, within that dell,
Changed from his former self by potent spell.

LVI.

Him in the figure of Atlantes sage
She fronts, who bore the enchanter's borrowed cheer;
With that grave face, and reverend with age,
Which he was always wonted to revere;
And with that eye, which in his pupillage,
Beaming with wrath, he whilom so did fear.
And sternly cries, "Is this the fruit at last
"Which pays my tedious pain and labour past?

LVII.

"The marrow of the lion and the bear
"Didst thou for this thine early banquet make,
"And, trained by me, by cliff or cavern-lair,
"Strangle with infant hands the crested snake;
"Their claws from tiger and from panther tear,
"And tusks from living boar in tangled brake,
"That, bred in such a school, in thee should I
"Alcina's Atys or Adonis spy?

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Medoro and Angelica.

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LVIII.

" Is this the hope that stars, observed by me,
" Signs in conjunction, sacred fibres, bred;
" With what beside of dream or augury,
" And all those lots I but too deeply read,
" Which, while yet hanging at the breast, of thee,
" When these thy years should be accomplished, said,
" Thy feats should so be bruited far and near,
" Thou justly should be deemed without a peer?

LIX.

" This does, in truth, a fair beginning show;
" A seed which, we may hope, will soon conceive
" A Julius, Alexander, Scipio.
" Who thee Alcina's bondsman could believe;
" And (for the world the shameful fact might know)
" That all should, manifest to sight, perceive
" Upon thy neck and arms the servile chains,
" Wherewith she at her will her captive trains?

LX.

" If thine own single honour move not thee,
" And the high deeds which thou art called to do,
" Wherefore defraud thy fair posterity
" Of what, was oft predicted, should ensue?
" Alas! why seal the womb God willed should be
" Pregnant by thee with an illustrious crew,
" That far-renowned, and more than human line,
" Destined the sun in glory to outshine?

LXI.

" Forbid not of the noblest souls the birth,
" Formed in the ideas of the ETERNAL MIND,
" Destined, from age to age, to visit earth,
" Sprung from thy stock, and clothed in corporal rind;
" The spring of thousand palms and festal mirth,
" Through which, to Italy with losses pined
" And wounds, thy good descendants shall restore
" The fame and honours she enjoyed of yore.

LXII.

" Not only should these many souls have weight
" To bend thy purpose, holy souls, and bright,
" Which from thy fruitful tree shall vegetate;
" But, though alone, a single couple might
" Suffice a nobler feeling to create,
" Alphonso and his brother Hyppolite:
" Whose like was seldom witnessed to this time,
" Through all the paths whence men to virtue climb.

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LXIII.

"I was more wont to dwell upon this pair
"Than all the rest, of whom I prophesied;
"As well that these a greater part should bear
"In lofty virtues, as that I descried
"Thee, listening to my lore with closer care,
"Than to the tale of all thy seed beside.
"I saw thee joy that such a pair would shine
"Amid the heroes of thy noble line.

LXIV.

"Say, what has she, thou makest thy fancy's queen,
"More than what other courtezans possess?
"Who of so many concubine has been;
"How used her lovers in the end to bless,
"Thou truly know'st: but that she may be seen
"Without disguise, and in her real dress,
"This ring, returning, on thy finger wear,
"And thou shalt see the dame, and mark how fair."

LXV.

Abashed and mute, Rogero, listening,
In vain to her reproof an answer sought:
Who on his little finger put the ring,
Whose virtue to himself the warrior brought,
And such remorse and shame within him spring,
When on his altered sense the change is wrought,
A thousand fathoms deep he fain would lie
Buried in earth, unseen of any eye.

LXVI.

So speaking, to the natural shape she wore
Before his eyes returned the magic dame;
Nor old Atlantes' form was needed more,
The good effect obtained for which she came.
To tell you that which was not told before,
Melissa was the sage enchantress' name:
Who to Rogero now her purpose said,
And told with what design she thither sped:

LXVII.

Dispatched by her, who him in anxious pain
Desires, nor longer can without him be,
With the intent to loose him from the chain
Wherewith he was begirt by sorcery;
And had put on, more credence to obtain,
Atlantes de Carena's form; but she,
Seeing his health restored, now willed the youth,
Through her should hear and see the very truth.

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LXVIII.

"That gentle lady who so loves thee, who
"Were well deserving love upon thy part:
"To whom (unless forgot, thou know'st how true
"The tale) thou debtor for thy freedom art,
"This ring, which can each magic spell undo,
"Sends for thy succour, and would send her heart
"If with such virtue fraught, her heart could bring,
"Thee safety in thy perils, like the ring.

LXIX.

How Bradamant had loved, and loves, she says,
Continuing to Rogero her relation:
To this, her worth commends with fitting praise,
Tempering in truth and fondness her narration;
And still employs the choicest mode and phrase,
Which fits one skilful in negociation,
And on the false Alcina brings such hate,
As on things horrible is wont to wait;

LXX.

Brings hate on that which he so loved before;
Nor let the tale astonish which you hear,
For since his love was forced by magic lore,
The ring the false enchantment served to clear.
This too unmasked the charms Alcina wore,
And made all false, from head to foot, appear.
None of her own, but borrowed, all he sees,
And the once sparkling cup now drugged with lees.

LXXI.

Like boy who somewhere his ripe fruit bestows,
And next forgets the place where it is laid,
Then, after many days, conducted goes
By chance, where he the rich deposit made,
And wonders that the hidden treasure shows,
Not what it was, but rotten and decayed;
And hates, and scorns, and loathes, with altered eyes,
And throws away what he was used to prize.

LXXII.

Rogero thus, when by Melissa's lore
Advised, he to behold the fay returned,
And that good ring of sovereign virtue wore,
Which, on the finger placed, all spells o'erturned;
For that fair damsel he had left before,
To his surprise, so foul a dame discerned,
That in this ample world, examined round,
A hag so old and hideous is not found.

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LXXIII.

Pale, lean, and wrinkled was the face, and white,
And thinly clothed with hair Alcina's head;
Her stature reached not to six palms in height,
And every tooth was gone; for she had led
A longer life than ever mortal wight,
Than Hecuba or she in Cuma bred;
But thus by practice, to our age unknown,
Appeared with youth and beauty not her own.

LXXIV.

By art she gave herself the lovely look,
Which had on many like Rogero wrought;
But now the ring interpreted the book,
Which secrets, hid for many ages, taught
No wonder then that he the dame forsook,
And banished from his mind all further thought
Of love for false Alcina, found in guise
Which no new means of slippery fraud supplies.

LXXV.

But, as Melissa counselled him, he wore
His wonted semblance for a time, till he
Was with his armour, many days before
Laid by, again accoutred cap-a-pee.
And, lest Alcina should his end explore,
Feigned to make proof of his agility;
Feigned to make proof if for his arms he were
Too gross, long time unwont the mail to bear.

LXXVI.

Next Balisarda to his flank he tied
(For so Rogero's trenchant sword was hight),
And took the wondrous buckler, which, espied,
Not only dazzled the beholder's sight,
But seemed, when its silk veil was drawn aside,
As from the body it exhaled the sprite:
In its close cover of red sendal hung,
This at his neck the youthful warrior slung.

LXXVII.

Provided thus, he to the stables came,
And bade with bridle and with saddle dight
A horse more black than pitch; for so the dame
Counselled, well-taught how swift the steed and light.
Him Rabicano those who know him name,
And he the courser was, that with the knight,
Who stands beside the sea, the breeze's sport,
The whale of yore conducted to that port.

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LXXVIII.

The hippogryph he might have had at need,
Who next below good Rabican was tied,
But that the dame had cried to him, "Take heed,
"Thou know'st how ill that courser is to ride;"
And said the following day the winged steed
'Twas her intention from that realm to guide,
Where he should be instructed at his leisure,
To rein and run him every where at pleasure:

LXXIX.

Nor, if he took him not, would he suggest
Suspicion of the intended flight: The peer
This while performed Melissa's every hest,
Who, still invisible, was at his ear.
So feigning, from the wanton dome possessed
By that old strumpet, rode the cavalier;
And pricking forth drew near unto a gate,
Whence the road led to Logistilla's state.

LXXX.

Assaulting suddenly the guardian crew,
He, sword in hand, the squadron set upon;
This one he wounded, and that other slew,
And, point by point made good, the drawbridge won:
And ere of his escape Alcina knew,
The gentle youth was far away and gone.
My next shall tell his route, and how he gained
At last the realm where Logistilla reigned.

CANTO VIII.

ARGUMENT.

Rogero flies; Astolpho with the rest,
To their true shape Melissa does restore;
Rinaldo levies knights and squadrons, pressed
In aid of Charles assaulted by the Moor:
Angelica, by ruffians found at rest,
Is offered to a monster on the shore.
Orlando, warned in visions of his ill,
Departs from Paris sore against his will.

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I.

How many enchantresses among us! oh,
How many enchanters are there, though unknown!
Who for their love make man or woman glow,
Changing them into figures not their own.
Nor this by help of spirits from below,
Nor observation of the stars is done:[1]
But these on hearts with fraud and falsehood plot,
Binding them with indissoluble knot.

II.

Who with Angelica's, or rather who
Were fortified with Reason's ring, would see
Each countenance, exposed to open view,
Unchanged by art or by hypocrisy.
This now seems fair and good, whose borrowed hue
Removed, would haply foul and evil be.
Well was it for Rogero that he wore
The virtuous ring which served the truth to explore!

III.

Rogero, still dissembling, as I said,
Armed, to the gate on Rabican did ride;
Found the guard unprepared, nor let his blade
Amid that crowd, hang idle at his side:
He passed the bridge, and broke the palisade,
Some slain, some maimed; then t'wards the forest hied;
But on that road small space had measured yet,
When he a servant of the fairy met.

IV.

He on his fist a ravening falcon bore,
Which he made fly for pastime every day;
Now on the champaign, now upon the shore
Of neighbouring pool, which teemed with certain prey;
And rode a hack which simple housings wore,
His faithful dog, companion of his way.[2]
He, marking well the haste with which he hies,
Conjectures truly that Rogero flies.

V.

Towards him came the knave, with semblance haught,
Demanding whither in such haste he sped:
To him the good Rogero answers naught.
He hence assured more clearly that he fled,
Within himself to stop the warrior thought,
And thus, with his left arm extended, said:
"What, if I suddenly thy purpose balk,
"And thou find no defence against this hawk?"

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VI.

Then flies his bird, who works so well his wing,
Rabican cannot distance him in flight:
The falconer from his back to ground did spring,
And freed him from the bit which held him tight;
Who seemed an arrow parted from the string,
And terrible to foe, with kick and bite;
While with such haste behind the servant came,
He sped as moved by wind, or rather flame.

VII.

Nor will the falconer's dog appear more slow;
But hunts Rogero's courser, as in chace
Of timid hare the pard is wont to go.
Not to stand fast the warrior deems disgrace,
And turns towards the swiftly-footed foe,
Whom he sees wield a riding-wand, in place
Of other arms, to make his dog obey.
Rogero scorns his faulchion to display.

VIII.

The servant made at him, and smote him sore;
The dog his left foot worried; while untied
From rein, the lightened horse three times and more
Lashed from the croup, nor missed his better side.
The hawk, oft wheeling, with her talons tore
The stripling, and his horse so terrified,
The courser, by the whizzing sound dismayed,
Little the guiding hand or spur obeyed.

IX.

Constrained at length, his sword Rogero drew
To clear the rabble, who his course delay;
And in the animals' or villain's view
Did now its point, and now its edge display.
But with more hinderance the vexatious crew
Swarm here and there, and wholly block the way;
And that dishonour will ensue and loss,
Rogero sees, if him they longer cross.

X.

He knew each little that he longer stayed,
Would bring the fay and followers on the trail;
Already drums were beat, and trumpets brayed,
And larum-bells rang loud in every vale.
An act too foul it seemed to use his blade
On dog, and knave unfenced with arms or mail:
A better and a shorter way it were
The buckler, old Atlantes' work, to bare.

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XI.

He raised the crimson cloth in which he wore
The wondrous shield, enclosed for many a day;
Its beams, as proved a thousand times before,
Work as they wont, when on the sight they play;
Senseless the falconer tumbles on the moor;
Drop dog and hackney; drop the pinions gay,
Which poised in air the bird no longer keep:
Then glad Rogero leaves a prey to sleep.

XII.

In the mean time, Alcina, who had heard
How he had forced the gate, and, in the press,
Slaughtered a mighty number of her guard,
Remained nigh dead, o'erwhelmed with her distress:
She tore her vesture, and her visage marred,
And cursed her want of wit and wariness.
Then made forthwith her meiny sound to arms,
And round herself arrayed her martial swarms.

XIII.

Divided next, one squadron by the way
Rogero took, she sent; the bands were two:
She at the port embarked the next array,
And straight to sea dispatched the warlike crew.
With this good squadron went the desperate fay,
And darked by loosened sails the billows grew;
For so desire upon her bosom preyed,
Of troops she left her city unpurveyed.

XIV.

Without a guard she left her palace there,
Which to Melissa, prompt her time to seize,
To loose her vassals that in misery were,
Afforded all convenience and full ease;
—To range, at leisure, through the palace fair,
And so examine all her witcheries;
To raze the seal, burn images, and loose
Or cancel hag-knot,[3] rhomb, or magic noose.

XV.

Thence through the fields, fast hurrying from that dome,
The former lovers changed, a mighty train,
Some into rock or tree, to fountain some,
Or beast, she made assume their shapes again:
And these, when they anew are free to roam,
Follow Rogero's footsteps to the reign
Of Logistilla sage; and from that bourn
To Scythia, Persia, Greece, and Ind return.

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XVI.

They to their several homes dispatched, repair,
Bound by a debt which never can be paid:
The English duke, above the rest her care,
Of these, was first in human form arrayed:
For much his kindred and the courteous prayer
Of good Rogero with Melissa weighed.
Beside his prayers, the ring Rogero gave;
That him she by its aid might better save.

XVII.

Thus by Rogero's suit the enchantress won,
To his first shape transformed the youthful peer;
But good Melissa deemed that nought was done
Save she restored his armour, and that spear
Of gold, which whensoe'er at tilt he run,
At the first touch unseated cavalier;[4]
Once Argalia's, next Astolpho's lance,
And source of mighty fame to both in France.

XVIII.

The sage Melissa found this spear of gold,
Which now Alcina's magic palace graced,
And other armour of the warrior bold,
Of which he was in that ill dome uncased.
She climbed the courser of the wizard old,
And on the croup, at ease, Astolpho placed:
And thus, an hour before Rogero came,
Repaired to Logistilla, knight and dame.

XIX.

Meantime, through rugged rocks, and shagged with thorn,
Rogero wends, to seek the sober fay;
From cliff to cliff, from path to path forlorn,
A rugged, lone, inhospitable way:
Till he, with labour huge oppressed and worn,
Issued at noon upon a beach, that lay
'Twixt sea and mountain, open to the south,
Deserted, barren, bare, and parched with drouth.

XX.

The sunbeams on the neighbouring mountain beat[5]
And glare, reflected from the glowing mass
So fiercely, sand and air both boil with heat,
In mode that might have more than melted glass.
The birds are silent in their dim retreat,
Nor any note is heard in wood or grass,
Save the bough-perched Cicala's wearying cry,
Which deafens hill and dale, and sea and sky.

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XXI.

The heat and thirst and labour which he bore
By that drear sandy way beside the sea,
Along the unhabited and sunny shore,
Were to Rogero grievous company:
But for I may not still pursue this lore,
Nor should you busied with one matter be,
Rogero I abandon in this heat,
For Scotland; to pursue Rinaldo's beat.

XXII.

By king, by daughter, and by all degrees,
To Sir Rinaldo was large welcome paid;
And next the warrior, at his better ease,
The occasion of his embassy displayed:
'That he from thence and England, subsidies
'Of men was seeking, for his monarch's aid,
'In Charles's name;' and added, in his care,
The justest reasons to support his prayer.

XXIII.

The king made answer, that 'without delay,
'Taxed to the utmost of his power and might,
'His means at Charlemagne's disposal lay,
'For the honour of the empire and the right.
'And that, within few days, he in array
'Such horsemen, as he had in arms, would dight;
'And, save that he was now waxed old, would lead
'The expedition he was prayed to speed.

XXIV.

'Nor like consideration would appear
'Worthy to stop him, but that he possessed
'A son, and for such charge that cavalier,
'Measured by wit and force, was worthiest.
'Though not within the kingdom was the peer,
'It was his hope (as he assured his guest)
'He would, while yet preparing was the band,
'Return, and find it mustered to his hand.'

XXV.

So sent through all his realm, with expedition,
His treasurers, to levy men and steeds;
And ships prepared, and warlike ammunition,
And money, stores and victual for their needs.
Meantime the good Rinaldo on his mission,
Leaving the courteous king, to England speeds;
He brought him on his way to Berwick's town,
And was observed to weep when he was gone.

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XXVI.

The wind sat in the poop; Rinaldo good
Embarked, and bade farewell to all; the sheet
Still loosening to the breeze, the skipper stood,
Till where Thame's waters, waxing bitter, meet
Salt ocean: wafted thence by tide of flood,
Through a sure channel to fair London's seat,
Safely the mariners their course explore,
Making their way, with aid of sail and oar.

XXVII.

The Emperor Charles, and he, King Otho grave
Who was with Charles, by siege in Paris pressed,
A broad commission to Rinaldo brave,
With letters to the Prince of Wales addressed,
And countersigns had given, dispatched to crave
What foot and horse were by the land possessed.
The whole to be to Calais' port conveyed;
That it to France and Charles might furnish aid.

XXVIII.

The prince I speak of, who on Otho's throne
Sate in his stead, the vacant helm to guide,
Such honour did to Aymon's valiant son,*
He not with such his king had gratified.
Next, all to good Rinaldo's wish, was done:
Since for his martial bands on every side,
In Britain, or the isles which round her lay,
To assemble near the sea he fixed a day.

XXIX.

But here, sir, it behoves me shift my ground,
Like him that makes the sprightly viol ring,
Who often changes chord and varies sound,
And now a graver strikes, now sharper string:
Thus I:—who did to good Rinaldo bound
My tale, Angelica remembering;
Late left, where saved from him by hasty flight,
She had encountered with an anchorite.

XXX.

Awhile I will pursue her story: I
Told how the maid of him with earnest care,
Enquired, how she towards the shore might fly:
Who of the loathed Rinaldo has such fear,
She dreads, unless she pass the sea, to die,
As insecure in Europe, far or near,
But she was by the hermit kept in play,
Because he pleasure took with her to stay.

* Rinaldo.

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XXXI.

His heart with love of that rare beauty glowed,
And to his frozen marrow pierced the heat;
Who, after, when he saw that she bestowed
Small care on him, and thought but of retreat,
His sluggish courser stung with many a goad;
But with no better speed he plied his feet.
Ill was his walk, and worse his trot: nor spur
Could that dull beast to quicker motion stir:

XXXII.

And for the flying maid was far before,
And he would soon have ceased to track her steed,
To the dark cave recurred the hermit hoar,
And conjured up of fiends a grisly breed:
One he selected out of many more,
And first informed the demon of his need;
Then in the palfrey bade him play his part,
Who with the lady bore away his heart:

XXXIII.

And as sagacious dog on mountain tried
Before, accustomed fox or hare to chase,
If he behold the quarry choose one side,
The other takes, and seems to slight the trace:
But at the turn arriving, is espied,
Already tearing what he crossed to face;
So her the hermit by a different road
Will meet, wherever she her palfrey goad.

XXXIV.

What was the friar's design I well surmise;
And you shall know; but in another page.
Angelica now slow, now faster, flies,
Nought fearing this: while conjured by the sage,
The demon covered in the courser lies;
As fire sometimes will hide its smothered rage:
Then blazes with devouring flame and heat,
Unquenchable, and scarce allows retreat.

XXXV.

After the flying maid had shaped her course
By the great sea which laves the Gascon shore,
Still keeping to the rippling waves her horse,
Where best the moistened sand the palfrey bore,
Him, plunged into the brine, the fiend perforce
Dragged, till he swam amid the watery roar.
Nor what to do the timid damsel knew,
Save that she closer to her saddle grew.

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XXXVI.

She cannot, howsoe'er the rein she ply
Govern the horse, who swims the surge to meet:
Her raiment she collects and holds it high;
And, not to wet them, gathers up her feet.
Her tresses, which the breeze still wantonly
Assaults, dishevelled on her shoulders beat.
The louder winds are hushed, perchance in duty,
Intent, like ocean, on such sovereign beauty.

XXXVII.

Landward in vain her eyes[6] the damsel bright
Directs, which water face and breast with tears,
And ever sees, decreasing to her sight,
The beach she left, which less and less appears.
The courser, who was swimming to the right,
After a mighty sweep, the lady bears
To shore, where rock and cavern shag the brink,
As night upon the land begins to sink.

XXXVIII.

When in that desert, which but to descry
Bred fear in the beholder, stood the maid
Alone, as Phœbus, plunged in ocean, sky
And nether earth had left obscured in shade;
She paused in guise, which in uncertainty
Might leave whoever had the form surveyed,
If she were real woman, or some mock
Resemblance, coloured in the living rock.

XXXIX.

She, fixed and stupid in her wretchedness,
Stood on the shifting sand, with ruffled hair:
Her hands were joined, her lips were motionless,
Her languid eyes upturned, as in despair,
Accusing HIM on high, that to distress
And whelm her, all the fates united were.
Astound she stood awhile; when grief found vent
Through eyes and tongue, in tears and in lament:

XL.

"Fortune, what more remains, that thou on me
"Shouldst not now satiate thy revengeful thirst?
"What more (she said) can I bestow on thee
"Than, what thou seekest not, this life accurst?
"Thou wast in haste to snatch me from the sea,
"Where I had ended its sad days, immersed;
"Because to torture me with further ill
"Before I die, is yet thy cruel will.

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XLI.

"But what worse torment yet remains in store
"Beyond, I am unable to descry:
"By thee from my fair throne, which nevermore
"I hope to repossess, compelled to fly;
"I, what is worse, my honour lost deplore;
"For if I sinned not in effect, yet I
"Give matter by my wanderings to be stung
"For wantonness of every carping tongue.

XLII.

"What other good is left to woman, who
"Has lost her honour, in this earthly ball?
"What profits it that, whether false or true,
"I am deemed beauteous, and am young withal?
"No thanks to heaven for such a gift are due,
"Whence on my head does every mischief fall.
"For this my brother Argalia died;
"To whom small help enchanted arms supplied:

XLIII.

"For this the Tartar king, Sir Agrican,
"Subdued my sire, who Galaphron was hight,
"And of Catày in India was great khan;
"'Tis hence I am reduced to such a plight,
"That wandering evermore, I cannot scan
"At morn, where I shall lay my head at night.
"If thou hast ravished what thou couldst, wealth, friends,
"And honour; say what more thy wrath intends.

XLIV.

"If death by drowning in the foaming sea
"Was not enough thy wrath to satiate,
"Send, if thou wilt, some beast to swallow me,
"So that he keep me not in pain! Thy hate
"Cannot devise a torment, so it be
"My death, but I shall thank thee for my fate!"
Thus, with loud sobs, the weeping lady cried,
When she beheld the hermit at her side.

XLV.

From the extremest height the hermit hoar
Of that high rock above her, had surveyed
Angelica, arrived upon the shore,
Beneath the cliff, afflicted and dismayed.
He to that place had come six days before;
For him by path untrod had fiend conveyed:
And he approached her, feigning such a call,
As e'er Hilarion might have had, or Paul.

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XLVI.

When him, yet unagnized, she saw appear,
The lady took some comfort, and laid by,
Emboldened by degrees, her former fear:
Though still her visage was of death-like dye.
"*Misericord!* father," when the friar was near
(She said), "for brought to evil pass am I."
And told, still broke by sobs, in doleful tone,
The story, to her hearer not unknown.

XLVII.

To comfort her, some reasons full of grace,
Sage and devout the approaching hermit cites:
And, now his hand upon her moistened face,
In speaking, now upon her bosom lights:
As her, securer, next he would embrace:
Him, kindling into pretty scorn, she smites
With one hand on his breast, and backward throws,
Then flushed with honest red, all over glows.

XLVIII.

A pocket at the ancient's side was dight,
Where he a cruise of virtuous liquor wore;
And at those puissant eyes, whence flashed the light
Of the most radiant torch Love ever bore,
Threw from the flask a little drop, of might
To make her sleep: upon the sandy shore
Already the recumbent damsel lay,
The greedy elder's unresisting prey.

XLIX.

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L.

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Hopeless, at length upon the beach he lies,
And by the maid, exhausted, falls asleep.
When to torment him new misfortunes rise:
Fortune does seldom any measure keep;
Unused to cut her cruel pastime short,
If she with mortal man is pleased to sport.

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LI.

It here behoves me, from the path I pressed,
To turn awhile, ere I this case relate:
In the great northern sea, towards the west,
Green Ireland past, an isle is situate.
Ebuda is its name,[1] whose shores infest,
(Its people wasted through the Godhead's hate)
The hideous orc, and Proteus' other herd,
By him against that race in vengeance stirred.

LII.

Old stories, speak they falsely or aright,
Tell how a puissant king this country swayed;
Who had a daughter fair, so passing bright
And lovely, 'twas no wonder if the maid,
When on the beach she stood in Proteus' sight,
Left him to burn amid the waves: surveyed,
One day alone, upon that shore in-isled,
Her he compressed, and quitted great with child.

LIII.

This was sore torment to the sire, severe
And impious more than all mankind; nor he,
Such is the force of wrath, was moved to spare
The maid, for reason or for piety.
Nor, though he saw her pregnant, would forbear
To execute his sentence suddenly;
But bade together with the mother kill,
Ere born, his grandchild, who had done no ill.

LIV.

Sea-Proteus to his flocks' wide charge preferred
By Neptune, of all ocean's rule possessed,
Inflamed with ire, his lady's torment heard,
And, against law and usage, to molest
The land (no sluggard in his anger) stirred
His monsters, orc and sea-calf, with the rest;
Who waste not only herds, but human haunts,
Farm-house and town, with their inhabitants:

LV.

And girding them on every side, the rout
Will often siege to walled cities lay;
Where in long weariness and fearful doubt,
The townsmen keep their watch by night and day,
The fields they have abandoned all about,
And for a remedy, their last assay,
To the oracle, demanding counsel, fly,
Which to the suppliants' prayer made this reply:

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LVI.

'That it behoved them find a damsel, who
'A form as beauteous as that other wore,
'To be to Proteus offered up, in lieu
'Of the fair lady, slain upon the shore:
'He, if he deems her an atonement due,
'Will keep the damsel, nor disturb them more:
'If not; another they must still present,
'And so, till they the deity content.'

LVII.

And this it was the cruel usage bred;
That of the damsels held most fair of face,
To Proteus every day should one be led,
Till one should in the Godhead's sight find grace.
The first and all those others slain, who fed,
All a devouring orc, that kept his place
Beside the port, what time into the main
The remnant of the herd retired again.

LVIII.

Were the old tale of Proteus' false or true,
(For this, in sooth, I know not who can read)
With such a clause was kept by that foul crew
The savage, ancient statute, which decreed
That woman's flesh the ravening monster, who
For this came every day to land, should feed.
Though to be woman is a crying ill
In every place, 'tis here a greater still.

LIX.

O wretched maids! whom 'mid that barbarous rout
Ill-fortune on that wretched shore has tost!
Who for the stranger damsel prowl about,
Of her to make an impious holocaust;
In that the more they slaughter from without,
They less the number of their own exhaust.
But since not always wind and wave convey
Like plunder, upon every strand they prey.

LX.

With frigate and with galley wont to roam,
And other sort of barks they range the sea,
And, as a solace to their martyrdom,
From far, or from their isle's vicinity
Bear women off; with open rapine some,
These bought by gold, and those by flattery:
And, plundered from the different lands they scour,
Crowd with their captives dungeon-cell and tower.

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LXI.

Keeping that region close aboard, to explore
The island's lonely bank, a galley creeps;
Where, amid stubs upon the grassy shore,
Angelica, unhappy damsel, sleeps.
To wood and water there the sailors moor,
And from the bark, for this, a party leaps;
And there that matchless flower of earthly charms
Discovers in the holy father's arms.

LXII.

Oh! prize too dear, oh! too illustrious prey!
To glut so barbarous and so base a foe!
Oh! cruel Fortune! who believed thy sway
Was of such passing power in things below?
That thou shouldst make a hideous monster's prey
The beauty, for which Agrican did glow,
Brought with half Scythia's people from the gates
Of Caucasu,[8] in Ind, to find their fates.

LXIII.

The beauty, by Circassian Sacripant
Preferred before his honour and his crown,
The beauty which made Roland, Brava's vaunt,
Sully his wholesome judgment and renown,
The beauty which had moved the wide Levant,
And awed, and turned its kingdoms upside down,
Now has not (thus deserted and unheard)
One to assist it even with a word.

LXIV.

Oppressed with heavy sleep upon the shore,
The lovely virgin, ere awake, they chain:
With her, the enchanter friar the pirates bore
On board their ship, a sad, afflicted train.
This done, they hoisted up their sail once more,
And the bark made the fatal isle again.
Where, till the lot shall of their prey dispose,
Her prisoned in a castle they enclose.

LXV.

But such her matchless beauty's power, the maid
Was able that fierce crew to mollify,
Who many days her cruel death delayed,
Preserved until their last necessity;
And while they damsels from without purveyed,
Spared such angelic beauty: finally,
The damsel to the monstrous orc they bring,
The people all behind her sorrowing.

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LXVI.

Who shall relate the anguish, the lament
And outcry which against the welkin knock?
I marvel that the sea-shore was not rent,
When she was placed upon the rugged block,
Where, chained and void of help, the punishment
Of loathsome death awaits her on the rock.
This will not I, so sorrow moves me, say,
Which makes me turn my rhymes another way;

LXVII.

To find a verse of less lugubrious strain,
Till I my wearied spirit shall restore:
For not the squalid snake of mottled stain,
Nor wild and whelpless tiger, angered more,
Nor what of venomous, on burning plain,
Creeps 'twixt the Red and the Atlantic shore,
Could see the grisly sight, and choose but moan
The damsel bound upon the naked stone.

LXVIII.

Oh! if this chance to her Orlando, who
Was gone to Paris-town to seek the maid,
Had been reported! or those other two,
Duped by a post, dispatched from Stygian shade,
They would have tracked her heavenly footsteps through
A thousand deaths, to bear the damsel aid.
But had the warriors of her peril known,
So far removed, for what would that have done?

LXIX.

This while round Paris-walls the leaguer lay
Of famed Troyano's son's besieging band,
Reduced to such extremity one day,
That it nigh fell into the foeman's hand;
And, but that vows had virtue to allay
The wrath of Heaven, whose waters drenched the land,
That day had perished by the Moorish lance
The holy empire and great name of France.

LXX.

To the just plaint of aged Charlemagne
The great Creator turned his eyes, and stayed
The conflagration with a sudden rain,
Which haply human art had not allayed.
Wise whosoever seeketh, not in vain,
His help, than whose there is no better aid!
Well the religious king, to whom 'twas given,
Knew that the saving succour was from Heaven.

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LXXI.

All night long counsel of his weary bed,
Vexed with a ceaseless care, Orlando sought;
Now here, now there, the restless fancy sped,
Now turned, now seized, but never held the thought:
As when, from sun or nightly planet shed,
Clear water has the quivering radiance caught,
The flashes through the spacious mansion fly,
With reaching leap, right, left, and low, and high.[9]

LXXII.

To memory now returned his lady gay,
She rather ne'er was banished from his breast;
And fanned the secret fire, which through the day
(Now kindled into flame) had seemed at rest;
That in his escort even from Catày
Of farthest Ind, had journeyed to the west;
There lost: Of whom he had discerned no token
Since Charles's powernear Bordeaux-town was broken.

LXXIII.

This in Orlando moved great grief, and he
Lay thinking on his folly past in vain:
"My heart," he said, "oh! how unworthily
"I bore myself! and out, alas! what pain,
"(When night and day I might have dwelt with thee,
"Since this thou didst not in thy grace disdain,)
"To have let them place thee in old Namus' hand!
"Witless a wrong so crying to withstand.

LXXIV.

"Might I not have excused myself?—The king
"Had not perchance gainsaid my better right—
"Or if he had gainsaid my reasoning,
"Who would have taken thee in my despite?
"Why not have armed, and rather let them wring
"My heart out of my breast? But not the might
"Of Charles or all his host, had they been tried,
"Could have availed to tear thee from my side.

LXXV.

"Oh! had he placed her but in strong repair,
"Guarded in some good fort, or Paris-town!
"—Since he *would* trust her to Duke Namus' care,
"That he should lose her in this way, alone
"Sorts with my wish. —Who would have kept the fair
"Like me, that would for her to death have gone?
"Have kept her better than my heart or sight:
"Who should and could, yet did not what I might.

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LXXVI.

" Without me, my sweet life, beshrew me, where
" Art thou bestowed, so beautiful and young!
" As some lost lamb, what time the daylight fair
" Shuts in, remains the wildering woods among,
" And goes about lamenting here and there,
" Hoping to warn the shepherd with her tongue;
" Till the wolf hear from far the mournful strain,
" And the sad shepherd weep for her in vain.

LXXVII.

" My hope, where art thou, where? In doleful wise
" Dost thou, perchance, yet rove thy lonely round?
" Art thou, indeed, to ravening wolf a prize,
" Without thy faithful Roland's succour found?
" And is the flower, which, with the deities,
" Me, in mid heaven had placed, which, not to wound,
" (So reverent was my love) thy feelings chaste,
" I kept untouched, alas! now plucked and waste?

LXXVIII.

" If this fair flower be plucked, oh, misery! oh,
" Despair! what more is left me but to die?
" Almighty God, with every other woe
" Rather than this, thy wretched suppliant try.
" If this be true, these hands the fatal blow
" Shall deal, and doom me to eternity."
Mixing his plaint with bitter tears and sighs,
So to himself the grieved Orlando cries.

LXXIX.

Already every where, with due repose,
Creatures restored their weary spirits; laid
These upon stones and upon feathers those,
Or greensward, in the beech or myrtle's shade:
But scarcely did thine eyes, Orlando, close,
So on thy mind tormenting fancies preyed.
Nor would the vexing thoughts which bred annoy,
Let thee in peace that fleeting sleep enjoy.

LXXX.

To good Orlando it appeared as he,
Mid odorous flowers, upon a grassy bed,
Were gazing on that beauteous ivory,
Which Love's own hand had tinged with native red;
And those two stars of pure transparency,
With which he in Love's toils his fancy fed:
Of those bright eyes, and that bright face, I say,
Which from his breast had torn his heart away.

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LXXXI.

He with the fullest pleasure overflows,
That ever happy lover did content:
But, lo! this time a mighty tempest rose,
And wasted flowers, and trees uptore and rent.
Not with the rage with which this whirlwind blows,
Joust warring winds, north, south, and east, unpent.
It seemed, as if in search of covering shade,
He, vainly wandering, through a desert strayed.

LXXXII.

Meanwhile the unhappy lover lost the dame
In that dim air, nor how he lost her, weets;
And, roving far and near, her beauteous name
Through every sounding wood and plain repeats.
And while, "oh wretched me!" is his exclaim,
"Who has to poison changed my promised sweets?"
He of his sovereign lady who with tears
Demands his aid, the lamentation hears

LXXXIII.

Thither, whence come the sound, he swiftly hies,
And toils, now here, now there, with labour sore:
Oh! what tormenting grief, to think his eyes
Cannot again the lovely rays explore!
—Lo! other voice from other quarter cries—
"Hope not on earth to enjoy the blessing more."[10]
At that alarming cry he woke, and found
Himself in tears of bitter sorrow drowned.

LXXXIV.

Not thinking that like images are vain,
When fear, or when desire disturbs our rest,
The thought of her, exposed to shame and pain,
In such a mode upon his fancy pressed,
He, thundering, leaped from bed, and with what chain
And plate behoved, his limbs all over dressed;
Took Brigliadoro from the stall he filled,
Nor any squire attendant's service willed.

LXXXV.

And to pass every where, yet not expose
By this his dignity to stain or slight,
The old and honoured ensign he foregoes,
His ancient bearing, quartered red and white.
And in its place a sable ensign shows,
Perhaps as suited to his mournful plight,
That erst he from an Amostantes bore,
Whom he had slain in fight some time before.[11]

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LXXXVI.

At midnight he departed silently,
Nor to his uncle spake, nor to his true
And faithful comrade Brandimart, whom he
So dearly cherished, even bade adieu;
But when, with golden tresses streaming-free,
The sun from rich Tithonus' inn withdrew,
And chased the shades, and cleared the humid air,
The king perceived Orlando was not there.

LXXXVII.

To Charles, to his displeasure, were conveyed
News that his nephew had withdrawn at night,
When most he lacked his presence and his aid;
Nor could he curb his choler at the flight,
But that with foul reproach he overlaid,
And sorely threatened the departed knight,
By him so foul a fault should be repented,
Save he, returning home, his wrath prevented.

LXXXVIII.

Nor would Orlando's faithful Brandimart,
Who loved him as himself, behind him stay;
Whether to bring him back he in his heart
Hoped, or of him ill brooked injurious say:
And scarce, in his impatience to depart,
Till fall of eve his sally would delay.
Lest she should hinder his design, of this
He nought imparted to his Flordelis:

LXXXIX.

To him this was a lady passing dear,
And from whose side he was unwont to stray,
Endowed with manners, grace, and beauteous cheer,
Wisdom and wit: if now he went away
And took no leave, it was because the peer
Hoped to revisit her that very day.
But that befel him after, as he strayed,
Which him beyond his own intent delayed.

XC.

She when she has expected him in vain
Well nigh a month, and nought of him discerns,
Sallies without a guide or faithful train,
So with desire of him her bosom yearns:
And many a country seeks for him in vain;
To whom the story in due place returns.
No more I now shall tell you of these two,
More bent Anglantes' champion to pursue;

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XCI.

Who having old Almontes' blazonry
So changed, drew nigh the gate; and there the peer
Approached a captain of the guard, when he;
"I am the County," whispered in his ear;
And (the bridge quickly lowered, and passage free
At his commandment) by the way most near
Went straight towards the foe: but what befel
Him next, the canto which ensues shall tell.

CANTO IX.[1]

ARGUMENT.

So far Orlando wends, he comes to where
He of old Proteus' hears the cruel use
But feels such pity for Olympia fair,
Wronged by Cymosco, who in prison mews
Her plighted spouse, that ere he makes repair
Further, he gives her hope to venge the abuse:
He does so, and departs; and with his spouse
Departs Bireno, to repeat his vows.

I.

What cannot, when he has a heart possess'd,
This false and cruel traitor Love? since he
Can banish from Orlando's faithful breast
Such tried allegiance and due loyalty?
Wise, full of all regards, and of the blest
And glorious church the champion wont to be,
Now, little for himself or uncle, driven
By a vain love, he cares, and less for heaven.

II.

But I excuse him well, rejoiced to know
I have like partner in my vice: for still
To seek my good I too am faint and slow,
But sound and nimble in pursuit of ill.
The count departs, disguised in sable show,
Nor for so many friends, with froward will,
Deserted cares; and comes where on the plain
Are camped the hosts of Afric and of Spain;

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III.

Rather uncamped: for, in less troops or more,
Rains under shed and tree had driven the band.
Here ten, there twenty, seven or eight, or four,
Nearer or further off, Orlando scanned.
Each sleeps, oppressed with toil and wearied sore;
This stretched on earth, that propped upon his hand:
They sleep, and many might the count have slain,
Yet never bared his puissant Durindane.[1]

IV.

So generous is Orlando's heart, he base
Esteems it were to smite a sleeping foe.
Now this he seeks, and now that other place:
Yet cannot track his lady, high or low.
If he finds any one in waking case,
Sighing, to him he paints her form and show;
Then prays him that for courtesy, he where
The damsel is, will teach him to repair.

V.

And when the day its shining light displayed,
He wholly searched the Moorish army through.
In that the gentle warrior was arrayed
In Arab weeds, he this might safely do;
And of his purpose came alike in aid
That other tongues beside the French he knew;
And in the African so well was read,
He seemed in Tripoly one born and bred:

VI.

He sojourns there three days, the camp to see;
Still seeking nought beside: next up and down,
Within, without, both burgh and city he
Spies; nor surveys the realm of France alone;
But fair Auvergne, and even Gascony
Revisits, to its farthest little town.
Roves from Provence to Britany's domain,
And from the Picards to the bounds of Spain.

VII.

Between October and November's moon,
In that dull season when the leafy vest
Is stript from trembling plant, whose limbs are shown
Of all their mantling foliage dispossess'd,
And in close flights the swarming birds are flown,
Orlando enters on his amorous quest:
This he pursues the livelong winter through,
Nor quits when gladsome spring returns anew.

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VIII.

As (such his wont) from land to land he goes,
A river's side he reaches on a day;
Which to the neighbouring sea in quiet flows,
Bretons and Normans parting on its way:
But, swoln with mountain rain and melted snows,
Then thundered, white with foam and flashing-spray:
And with impetuous stream had overtopt
Its brim, and burst the bridge, and passage stopt.

IX.

The paladin this bank and the other eyed,
Along the river's channel, to explore,
Since neither fish nor fowl, if from his side
He could gain footing on the adverse shore;
When, with a damsel in the poop, he spied
A ready pinnace that towards him bore:
She steered, as if she would approach the strand;
But would not let her shallop make the land.

X.

Steered not to land; as haply with suspicion
To take a lading, in her own despite.
To her the good Orlando made petition
To put him o'er the stream; and she: "No knight
"Passes this ferry, but upon condition
"He shall his faith and promise duly plight,
"That he will do a battle, at my prayer,
"Upon the justest quarrel and most fair.

XI.

"So that if thou on the other shore to land
"Dost by my aid, Sir cavalier, desire,
"Promise me, ere the month which is at hand"
(The damsel so pursued her speech) "expire,
"That thou wilt join the Hibernian monarch's band,
"Who forms a fair armada, in his ire,
"To sack Ebuda's isle; of all compress'd
"By ocean's circling waves, the cruellest.

XII.

"Know, beyond Ireland, in the briny flood,
"An island, amid many others, lies;
"Ebuda is its name; whose people rude
"(Such is their law), in search of plunder hies;
"And all the women that it takes, for food
"To a voracious animal supplies;
"Which every day to shore for this does speed,
"And finds new wife or maid whereon to feed:

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XIII.

"For of these merchant still and Corsair sell
"A large supply, and most of those most fair.
"Reckoning one slain a-day, you thus may well
"Compute what wives and maids have perished there.
"But if compassion in your bosom dwell,
"Nor you to Love an utter rebel are,
"Be you contented with this band to wend,
"United for such profitable end."

XIV.

To hear the whole Orlando scarce could bear,
Ere to be first in that emprize he swore,[2]
As one who evil deed misliked to hear,
And with impatience like relation bore:
Hence first induced to think, and next to fear,
Angelica is captive on that shore:
Since he so long the missing maid pursues,
Nor of the damsel yet can gather news.

XV.

Breaking his every scheme, this phantasy
The troubled cavalier did so confound,
That with all speed to that fell island he
Resolved to navigate; nor yet the round
Of a new sun was buried in the sea,
Ere he a vessel at St. Malo's found;
In which, embarking on his quest, the count
Put forth, and cleared that night St. Michael's Mount.[3]

XVI.

Breac and Landriglier[4] past on the left hand,
Orlando's vessel skims the Breton shore;
Then shapes her course towards the chalky strand,
Whence England's isle the name of Albion bore:
But the south wind, which had her canvas fanned,
Shifts to north-west, and freshening, blows so sore,
The mariners are fain to strike all sail,
And wear and scud before the boisterous gale.

XVII.

A distance traversed in four days, in one
Backwards the ceaseless wind the frigate bore;
The helmsman kept the sea, lest she should run
Aground, and break like glass upon the shore.
The wind upon the fifth day changed its tune,
So loud and furious through the other four;
And let, without more strife, the vessel gain
A port, where Antwerp's river met the main.

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XVIII.

As soon as harboured there in shattered plight,
The weary mariners their frigate moor,
Out of a city, seated on the right
Of that fair stream, descends upon the shore,
As his gray hairs may warrant him, a wight
Stricken in years; who, full of courteous lore,
Turns to the county, after greetings due,
Reputing him the leader of that crew.

XIX.

And prays him, on a damsel's part, 'that he
'To her would think not irksome to repair;
'Whom of unequalled affability
'And sweetness, he would find, as well as fair;
'Or otherwise would be content, that she
'Should to his bark resort, to seek him there,
'Nor prove less pliant than had been before
'All the knights errant, who had sought that shore:

XX.

'For hitherto, by land or sea conveyed,
'No cavalier had journeyed to that place
'That had refused to parley with the maid,
'And give her counsel in a cruel case.'
Orlando, hearing this, no more delayed,
But issued from the bark with hurried pace,
And, in all kind and courteous usage bred,
His way directed where the ancient led.

XXI.

With him did Roland to the city go,
And at the bottom of a palace-stair,
Conducted by that elder, full of woe
A lady found, if face may grief declare,
And sable cloth, with which (a mournful show)
Chamber, and hall, and gallery, furnished were;
Who, after honourable welcome paid,
Seated the paladin, and sadly said.

XXII.

"The daughter of the Count of Holland," (cried
The lady) "know in me, Sir cavalier.
"Though not his only offspring (for beside
"Myself two brothers were) to him so dear,
"That, for whatever favour I applied,
"I never met refusal from the peer.
"I living gladly in this happy sort,
"A duke by chance was guested at our court;

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XXIII.

"The Duke of Zealand, meaning for Biscay;
"With purpose there to war upon the Moor;
"His youth and beauty, then in manhood's May,
"And force of love, unfelt by me before,
"Made me, with little strife, his easy prey:
"Persuaded by his outward cheer yet more,
"I thought, and think, and still shall think, the peer
"Loved me, and loves me yet with heart sincere.

XXIV.

"Those days, whenas the wind was contrary,
"(Which fair for me, if foul for others blew)
"To others forty seemed, an hour to me;
"So upon speedy wings the moments flew.
"This while, we oftentimes held colloquy,
"When, to be given with solemn right and due,
"I promised him, and he to me, his hand,
"On his return, in wedlock's holy band.

XXV.

"Bireno hardly from our court was gone,
"For such the name my faithful lover bore,
"When Friesland's king, whose realm is from our own
"No further than this stream from Ocean's shore,
"Designing to bestow me on his son,
"Arbantes hight (the monarch had no more),
"To Holland sent the worthiest of his land,
"Me of the count, my father, to demand.

XXVI.

"I without power to falsify that vow,
"Which to my gentle lover I had plight;
"Nor though I had the power, would Love allow
"Me so to play the ingrate, if I might,
"(The treaty, well on foot, to overthrow,
"And nigh concluded) with afflicted sprite,
"Cried *to my father, I would rather shed*
"*My very life-blood, than in Friesland wed.*

XXVII.

"My gracious father, he who took but pleasure
"In what pleased me, nor would my will constrain;
"Marking my grief, broke off the intended measure,
"To give me comfort and relieve my pain.
"At this proud Friesland's sovereign such displeasure
"Conceived, and entertained such high disdain;
"He entered Holland, and the war began,
"In which my kin were slaughtered to a man.

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XXVIII.

"Besides, that both his puissance and his might
"Are such, as in our age are matched of few,
"Such is in evil deeds his cunning sleight,
"He laughs to scorn what wit and force can do.
"Strange arms he bears, unknown to any wight,
"Save him, of the ancient nations or the new:
"A hollow iron, two yards long, whose small
"Channel he loads with powder and a ball.

XXIX.

"He, where 'tis closed behind, in the iron round,
"Touches with fire a vent, discerned with pain;
"In guise that skilful surgeon tries his ground,
"Where need requires that he should breathe a vein.
"Whence flies the bullet with such deafening sound,
"That bolt and lightning from the hollow cane
"Appear to dart, and like the passing thunder,
"Burn what they smite, beat-down or rend asunder.

XXX.

"Twice broken, he our armies overthrew
"With this device, my gentle brethren slain;
"The first the shot in our first battle slew,
"Reaching his heart, through broken plate and chain;
"The other in the other onset, who
"Was flying from the fatal field in vain.
"The ball his shoulder from a distance tore
"Behind, and issued from his breast before.

XXXI.

"My father next, defending on a day
"The only fortress which he still possessed,
"The others taken which about it lay,
"Was sent alike to his eternal rest:
"Who going and returning, to purvey
"What lacked, as this or that occasion pressed,
"Was aimed at from afar, in privy wise,
"And by the traitor struck between the eyes.

XXXII.

"And I remaining, sire and brethren dead,
"The isle of Holland's only heir, the king
"Of Friesland, who by the desire was led
"Of better there his power establishing,
"To me, and also to my people said,
"I peace and quiet to my state might bring,
"Would I (what I before would not accord)
"Now take his son Arbantes for my lord.

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XXXIII.

"I, not so much for deadly hate I bear
"To him and all his kindred, by whose spite
"My sire and both my brothers slaughtered were,
"My country sacked and waste, as that the knight
"I would not wrong, to whom I fealty sware,
"And had my solemn word already plight
"That me to wedlock man should woo in vain,
"Till he to Holland should return from Spain,

XXXIV.

"For one ill-born, a hundred yet behind,
"Will bear (replied) to hazard all content,
"—Slain, burnt alive, to let them to the wind
"Scatter my ashes, rather than consent.—
"My people seek to move my stedfast mind,
"By prayer and by protest, from this intent;
"And threat to yield my city up and me,
"Lest all be lost through my obduracy.

XXXV.

"When in my fixt and firm resolve they read,
"That prayer and protest are alike in vain;
"My town and me, with Friesland's king agreed,
"Surrendered, as they vowed, my vassal train.
"Not doing by me any shameful deed,
"Me he assured of life and of domain,
"So I would soften my obdurate mood,
"And be to wed with his Arbantes wooed.

XXXVI.

"I who would have consented to forego
"My life to scape from him, reflection made,
"That, save I first avenged myself, all woe,
"Endured, would be by this regret outweighed.
"—Long time I muse, and to my misery know,
"'Tis only simulation which can aid.
"Not simple willingness, I feign, desire,
"To win his grace, and have him for my sire.

XXXVII.

"'Mid many in my father's service, I
"Select two brothers fitted for my view,
"Of valiant heart and great ability
"But more approved for truth, as followers, who
"Bred in my father's court, from infancy
"Had with myself grown up; the brothers two
"So wholly bound to me, they would have thought
"My safety with their lives was cheaply bought.

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XXXVIII.

" To them I tell my project, and the pair
" Of brethren promise me their faithful aid:
" To Flanders this, a pinnace to prepare,
" I sent, and that with me in Holland stayed.
" Now, while both foreigners and natives were,
" Of Friesland's kingdom, to our nuptials prayed,
" Bireno in Biscay (the tidings went)
" For Holland had equipt an armament.

XXXIX.

" Since on the issue of the earliest fray,
" When in the rout one hapless brother fell,
" I had dispached a courier to Biscay,
" Who the sad news should to Bireno tell:
" While he toils sore his squadron to array,
" Proud Friesland's arms our wretched remnant quell.
" Bireno, who knew nought of this, had weighed,
" And with his barks put forth to bring us aid.

XL.

" These tidings told to Friesland's monarch, he
" Confiding to his son the wedding's care,
" To meet Bireno's squadron puts to sea,
" And (so chance willed) burns, sinks, or routs them there
" Leading him off into captivity;—
" But none to us as yet the tidings bear.
" This while I to the amorous youth am wed,
" Who, when the sun sought *his*, would seek *my* bed.

XLI.

" Behind the curtains, I had hid the tried
" And faithful follower, of whom I said,
" Who moved not till the bridegroom he descried,
" Yet waited not till he in bed was laid:
" But raised a hatchet, and so well applied
" Behind the stripling's head the ponderous blade,
" Of speech and life it reft him; I, who note
" The deed, leap lightly up and cut his throat.[5]

XLII.

" As falls the bullock upon shamble-sill,
" Thus fell the ill-starred stripling, in despite
" Of king Cymosco, worst among the ill;
" So was the impious king of Friesland hight,
" Who did my brothers and my father kill,
" And, in my state to found a better right;
" In wedlock wished to join me with his son;
" Haply to slay me when his end was won.

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XLIII.

"Ere new disturbance interrupt the deed,
"Taking what costliest was and lightest weighed,
"Me my companion by a cord, with speed,
"Drops from a window, where with boat purveyed
"In Flanders (as related) for my need,
"His brother, watchful of our motions, stayed:
"We dip the oar, we loose the sail, and driven
"By both, escape, as was the will of Heaven.

XLIV.

"The daring feat achieved, I cannot say
"If Friesland's king more sorrowed for his son,
"Or raged at me: he there arrived, the day
"Ensuing, where the dreadful deed was done.
"Proud he returned, both he and his array,
"Of the duke taken, and the victory won:
"And thought to feast and nuptials he was bound,
"But in his home all grief and darkness found.

XLV.

"His pity for his son, the hate he fed
"Towards me, torment the father day and night;
"But as lamenting will not raise the dead,
"And vengeance is a vent for smothered spite;
"That portion of his thoughts, which should have led
"The king, to ease by sighs his troubled sprite,
"Now willingly takes counsel with his hate,
"To seize me, and his vengeance satiate.

XLVI.

"All known or said to be my friends, or who
"Were friends of those that, chosen from my train,
"Had aided me the deadly deed to do,
"Their goods and chattels burnt, were doomed or slain:
"And he had killed Bireno, since he knew
"No other trouble could inflict such pain;
"But that he, saving him in malice, thought
"He had a net wherewith I might be caught.

XLVII.

"Yet him a cruel proposition made,
"Granting a year his purpose to complete;
"Condemned to privy death, till then delayed,
"Save in that time, through force or through deceit,
"He by his friends' and kindred's utmost aid,
"Doing or plotting, me from my retreat
"Conveyed into his prisons; so that he
"Can only saved by my destruction be.

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XLVIII.

" What for his safety could be done, behold,
" Short of my own destruction, has been tried.
" Six towns I had in Flanders: these I sold,
" And (great or small the produce put aside)
" A part of it, to wily persons told,
" That it to tempt his guards might be applied;
" The rest of it dispensed to move and arm
" Germans or English, to the miscreant's harm.

XLIX.

" My agents, whether they their trust betrayed,
" Or that they could in truth perform no more,
" Me with vain words instead of help have paid,
" And scorn me, having drained my scanty store:
" And now the term is nigh expired, when aid,
" Whether of open force or treasured ore,
" No longer will arrive in time to save
" My cherished spouse from torture and the grave.

L.

" Through him, from me was my dominion rent;
" Through him, my father and my brethren slain;
" Through him, the little treasure left me, spent
" (What served alone existence to sustain)
" To rescue him, in cruel durance pent;
" Nor other means to succour him remain;
" Save I, to liberate him from prison, go
" And yield myself to such a cruel foe.

LI.

" If nothing more be left me then to try,
" Nor other way for his escape appear,
" Than *his* with this *my* wretched life to buy,
" This life I gladly will lay down: one fear
" Alone molests me; and it is that I
" Can never my conditions make so clear,
" As to assure me, that with new deceit,
" Me, when his prey, the tyrant will not cheat.

LII.

" I fear, when I shall be in captive plight,
" And he has put all tortures upon me,
" He may not loose Bireno, and the knight
" Have not to thank me for his liberty:
" Like perjured king, and full of foul despite,
" Who with my murder will not satiate be;
" But by Bireno neither less nor more
" Will do, than he had done by me before.

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LIII.

"The occasion now that I confer with you,
"And tell my case to all who seek the land,
"Both lords and knights, is with the single view,
"That taking counsel of so large a band,
"Some one may indicate assurance due,
"That when before the cruel king I stand,
"No longer he Bireno shall detain;
"Nor, after I am killed, the duke be slain.

LIV.

"Warrior to wend with me, I in my need,
"When I shall be to Friesland given, have prayed;
"But so he promise, that the exchange agreed
"Shall be between us in such manner made,
"That from his bonds Bireno shall be freed
"When I am to the monarch's hands conveyed:
"Thus I, when I am slain, shall die content,
"Who to my spouse shall life by death have lent:

LV.

"Nor to this day have chanced upon a wight
"Who on his faith will give me warranty,
"That if the king refuse to loose the knight,
"When I am offered, from captivity,
"He will not suffer that in my despite
"(So feared those weapons!) I shall taken be.
"So feared those weapons, upon every hand!
"Which, howsoever thick, no plates withstand.

LVI.

"Now, if as strong Herculean port and bold
"Appear to vouch, such worth to you belong;
"And you believe to give me or withhold
"Is in your power, should he intend me wrong;
"Be with me, when committed to his hold,
"Since I shall fear not, in your convoy strong,
"When you are with me, that my lord, though I
"Be after slain, shall by his order die."

LVII.

Here her discourse, wherewith were interposed
Loud sobs, the lady ceased, and silent stood:
Orlando, when her lips the damsel closed,
Whose ready will ne'er halts in doing good,
Briefly to her replies, as indisposed
To idle speeches of his natural mood:
But plights his solemn word, that better aid
She should from him receive than that she prayed.

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LVIII.

'Tis not his scheme to place her in the hand
Of her foul foe, to have Bireno freed;
He will save both the lovers, if his brand
And wonted valour fail him not at need.
Embarked that very day, they put from land
With a clear sky and prosperous wind to speed.
The county hastes in his impatient heat,
Eager to reach that isle, the monster's seat.

LIX.

Through the still deeps, on this or the other side,
The skipper veered his canvas to the wind:
This isle, and that of Zealand, they descried,
One seen before, and one shut in behind.[6]
The third day, from the harboured vessel's side,
In Holland, Roland disembarks, not joined
By the complaining dame; whom to descend
He wills not till she hear that tyrant's end.

LX.

Armed at all points, the county passed ashore,
Borne on a horse 'twixt brown and black, the breed
Of Denmark, but in Flanders nurtured, more
Esteemed for weight and puissance than for speed:
For when the paladin embarked before,
In Brittany he left the gallant steed,
His Brigliador; so nimble and so fair,
That but Bayardo could with him compare.

LXI.

Orlando fares to Dordrecht, where he views
A numerous squadron, which the gate maintain;
As well, because suspicion still ensues
On the foundation of a new domain;
As that before they had received the news,
That out of Zealand, backed with armed train,
Was coming with a fleet of many sail,
A cousin of the lord here pent in jail.

LXII.

One, good Orlando to the monarch's ear
Bade bear a message, 'that an errant knight
'On him would prove himself, with sword and spear;
'But would lay down this pact before the fight:—
'That if the king unhorsed the cavalier,
'Her who Arbantes slew, he, as his right,
'Should have, that, at the cavalier's command,
'Was ready for delivery to his hand;

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LXIII.

'And willed the king should on his side agree,
'If him the knight in combat overbore,
'Forthwith released from his captivity,
'Bireno to full freedom to restore.'
To him the footman does his embassy;
But he, who knightly worth or courteous lore
Had never known, directs his whole intent
The count by treacherous fraud to circumvent.

LXIV.

He hopes as well, if he the warrior slay,
To have the dame, whom, so aggrieved, he hates,
If in the knight's disposal, and the say
Of that strange knight, the footman well relates.
Hence thirty men dispatched by other way
Than to the portal led, where Roland waits;
Who with a long and privy circuit wind,
And come upon the paladin behind.

LXV.

He all this while had made his guard delay
The knight with words, till horse and foot he spied
Arrived, where he this ambuscade did lay;
When from the gate he with as many hied:
As is the practised hunter's wonted way,
To circle wood and beasts on every side:
As nigh Volana, with his sweeping nets,
The wary fisher fish and pool besets.[7]

LXVI.

'Tis thus the king bars every path which lies
Free for the warrior's flight, with armed train:
He him alive, and in no other guise,
Would have, and lightly hopes his end to gain;
Nor for the earthly thunderbolt applies,
That had so many and so many slain:
Which here he deems would serve his purpose ill,
Where he desires to take and not to kill.

LXVII.

As wary fowler, bent on greater prey,
Wisely preserves alive the game first caught,
That by the call-bird and his cheating play,[8]
More may within the circling net be brought;
Such cunning art Cymosco would assay:
But Roland would not be so lightly bought;
Like them by the first toil that springs betrayed;
And quickly forced the circle which was made.

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LXVIII.

Where he perceives the assailants thickest stand,
He rests his lance, and sticks in his career
First one and afterwards another, and
Another, and another, who appear
Of paste; till six he of the circling band
Of foes impales upon a single spear;
A seventh left out, who by the push is slain,
Since the clogged weapon can no more contain.

LXIX.

No otherwise, upon the further shore
Of fosse or of canal, the frogs we spy,
By cautious archer, practised in his lore,
Smote and transfixed[9] the one the other nigh;
Upon the shaft, until it hold no more,
From barb to feathers full, allowed to lie.
The heavy lance Orlando from him flung,
And to close combat with his faulchion sprung.

LXX.

The lance now broke, his sword the warrior drew,
That sword which never yet was drawn in vain,
And still with cut or thrust some soldier slew;
Now horse, now footman of the tyrant's train.
And, ever where he dealt a stroke, changed blue,
Yellow, green, white, and black, to crimson stain.
Cymosco grieves, when most his needs require,
Not to have now his hollow cane and fire;

LXXI.

And with loud voice and menacing command
Bids these be brought, but ill his followers hear;
For those who have found safety of his band,
To issue from the city are in fear.
He, when he sees them fly on either hand,
Would fly as well from that dread cavalier;
Makes for the gate, and would the drawbridge lift,
But the pursuing county is too swift.

LXXII.

The monarch turns his back, and leaves the knight
Lord of the drawbridge and of either gate.
Thanks to his swifter steed, the rest in flight
He passes: good Orlando will not wait
(Intent the felon, not his band, to smite)
Upon the vulgar herd to wreck his hate.
But his slow horse seems restive; while the king's,
More nimble, flies as if equipt with wings.

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LXXIII.

From street to street, before the count he made;
And vanished clean; but after little stay,
Came with new arms, with tube and fire purveyed;
Which, at his hest, this while his men convey.
And posted at a corner, he waylaid:
His foe, as hunter watches for his prey,
In forest, with armed dogs[10] and spear, attending
The boar in fury from the hill descending,

LXXIV.

Who rends the branch and overthrows the stone;
And wheresoe'er he turns his haughty front,
Appears so loud the deafening crash and groan)
As if he were uprending wood and mount.
Intent to make him his bold deed atone,
Cymosco at the pass expects the count;
As soon as he appears, with ready light
Touches the hole, and fires upon the knight.

LXXV.

Behind, the weapon flames in lightning's guise,
And vents the thunder from before; the ground
Shakes under foot and city wall; the skies
The fearful echo all about rebound.
The burning bolt with sudden fury flies,
Not sparing aught which in its course is found.
Hissing and whizzing through the skies it went:
But smote not, to the assassin's foul intent.

LXXVI.

Whether it was his great desire to kill
That baron, or his hurry made him fail,
Or trembling heart, like leaf which flutters still,
Made hand and arm together flinch and quail;
Or that it was not the Creator's will
The church so soon her champion should bewail;
The glancing stroke his courser's belly tore,
Outstretched on earth, from thence to rise no more.

LXXVII.

To earth fall horse and rider: this the knight
Scarce touched; the other thundering pressed the plain:
For the first rose so ready and so light,
He from the fall seemed breath and force to gain.
As African Antëus, in the fight,
Rose from the sand with prouder might and main;
So when Orlando touched the ground, to view
He rose with doubled force and vigour new.

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LXXVIII.

He who has seen the thunder, from on high,
Discharged by Jove with such a horrid sound,
Descend where nitre, coal, and sulphur lie,
Stored up for use in magazine profound,
Which scarce has reached—but touched it, ere the sky
Is in a flame, as well as burning ground,
Firm walls are split, and solid marbles riven,
And flying stones cast up as high as heaven;

LXXIX.

Let him imagine, when from earth he sprung,
Such was the semblance of the cavalier;
Who moved in mode to frighten Mars among
The Gods, so fierce and horrid was his cheer.
At this dismay'd, the King of Friesland stung
His horse, and turned his rein, to fly the peer:
But fierce Orlando was upon his foe
Faster than arrow flies from bended bow:

LXXX.

And, what before he could not, when possest
Of his good courser, now afoot will do.
His speed outgoes all thought in every breast,
Exceeds all credence, save in those who view.
The tyrant shortly joined, he on the crest
Smote at his head so well, he cleft it through;
And to the neck divided by the blow,
Sent it, to shake its last on earth below.

LXXXI.

Lo! in the frighted city other sound
Was heard to rise, and other clash of brands,
From troop, who, thither in his guidance bound,
Followed Bireno's cousin from his lands:
Who, since the unguarded gates he open found,
Into the city's heart had poured his bands;
Where the bold paladin had struck such fear,
He without let might scour it far and near.

LXXXII.

In rout the people fly, who cannot guess
Who these may be, or what the foes demand:
But, when this man and that by speech and dress
As Zealand-men distinguishes the band,
Carte blanche they proffer, and the chief address,
Bidding him range them under his command;
Against the Frieslanders to lend him aid,
Who have their duke in loathsome prison stayed.

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LXXXIII.

To Friesland's king that people hatred bore
With all his following; who their ancient lord
Had put to death, and who by them yet more,
As evil and rapacious, was abhorred.
Orlando interposed with kindly lore,
As friend of both, the parties to accord:
By whom, so joined, no Frieslander was left
But was of life or liberty bereft.

LXXXIV.

They would not wait to seek the dungeon-key,
But breaking-down the gate, their entrance made:
Bireno to the count with courtesy
And grateful thanks the service done repaid.
Thence they, together with large company,
Went, where Olympia in her vessel stayed:
For so was the expecting lady hight,
To whom that island's crown belonged of right.

LXXXV.

She who had thither good Orlando brought,
Not hoping that he would have thriven so well;
—Enough for her, if by her misery bought,
Her spouse were rescued from the tyrant's cell!—
Her, full of love and loyal homage, sought
The people one and all: 'Twere long to tell
How she caressed Bireno, he the maid,—
What thanks both lovers to the county paid.

LXXXVI.

The people, throned in her paternal reign,
Replace the injured dame, and fealty swear:
She on the duke, to whom in solid chain
Love with eternal knot had linked the fair,
The empire of herself and her domain
Conferred: He, called away by other care,
Left in the cousin's guardian care this while
His fortresses, and all the subject isle.

LXXXVII.

Since he to visit Zealand's duchy planned,
His faithful consort in his company;
And thence, upon the king of Friesland's land,
Would try his fortune (as he said), for he
A pledge, he rated highly, had in hand,
Which seemed of fair success the warranty,
The daughter of the king; who here forsaken,
With many others had been prisoner taken.

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LXXXVIII.

To a younger brother, her, the duke pretends,
To be conjoined in wedlock, he conveyed.
The Roman senator* thence parting wends
Upon the very day Bireno weighed;
But he to nothing else his hand extends
Of all the many, many prizes made,
Save to that engine, found amid the plunder,
Which in all points I said resembled thunder.

LXXXIX.

Not with intent, in his defence to bear
What he had taken, of the prize possest;
For he still held it an ungenerous care
To go with vantage on whatever quest:
But with design to cast the weapon where
It never more should living wight molest;
And, what was appertaining to it, all
Bore off as well, the powder and the ball.

XC.

And thus, when of the tidesway he was clear,
And in the deepest sea his bark descried,
So, that no longer distant signs appear
Of either shore on this or the other side,
He seized the tube, and said: "That cavalier
"May never vail through thee his knightly pride,
"Nor base be rated with a better foe,
"Down with thee to the darkest deep below!

XCI.

"O loathed, O cursed piece of enginery,
"Cast in Tartarean bottom, by the hand
"Of Beelzebub, whose foul malignity
"The ruin of this world through thee has planned!
"To hell, from whence thou came, I render thee."
So said, he cast away the weapon; fanned
Meanwhile, with flowing sheet, his frigate goes,
By wind, which for the cruel island blows.

XCII.

Such was the paladin's desire to explore
If in that place his missing lady were;
Whom he prefers the united world before,
Nor can an hour of life without her bear.
He fears, if he set foot on Ireland's shore,
Some other chance may interrupt him there:
So that he after have in vain to say,
"Why hasted I no faster on my way?"

* Orlando.

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XCIII.

Nor he in England nor in Ireland port
Will make, nor on the coast that's opposite.
But let him go, the naked archer's sport,
Sore smitten in the heart!—ere I indite
Yet more of him, to Holland I resort,
And you to bear me company invite.
For well I wot that you as well as me
'Twould grieve *that* bridal should without us be.

XCIV.

Sumptuous and fair the bridal there is made;
But neither yet so sumptuous nor so fair
As it will be in Zealand, it is said:
But 'tis not my design you should repair
Thither; since by new accidents delayed
The feast will be, of which be it my care,
In other strain, the tidings to report;
If you to hear that other strain resort.

CANTO X.

ARGUMENT.

Another love assails Rireno's breast,
Who leaves one night Olympia on the shore.
To Logistilla's holy realm addressed,
Rogero goes, nor heeds Alcina more:
Him, of that flying courser repossest,
The hippogryph on airy voyage bore:
Whence he the good Rinaldo's levy sees,
And next Angelica beholds and frees.

I.

Of all the loves, of all fidelity
Yet proved, of all the constant hearts and true,
Of all the lovers, in felicity
Or sorrow faithful found, a famous crew,
To Olympia I would give the first degree
Rather than second: if this be not due,
I well may say than hers no tale is told
Of truer love, in present times or old.

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II.

And this she by so many proofs and clear,
Had made apparent to the Zealand lord,
No woman's faith more certain could appear
To man, though he her open heart explored:
And if fair truth such spirits should endear,
And they in mutual love deserve reward,
Bireno as himself, nay, he above,
Himself, I say, should kind Olympia love.

III.

Nor only should he nevermore deceive
Her for another, were that woman she
Who so made Europe and wide Asia grieve,
Or fairer yet, if one more fair there be;
But rather than quit her the light should leave,
And what is sweet to taste, touch, hear, and see,
And life and fame, and all beside; if aught
More precious can in truth be styled, or thought.

IV.

If her Bireno loved, as she had loved
Bireno, if her love he did repay
With faith like hers, and still with truth unmoved,
Veered not his shifting sail another way;
Or ingrate for such service—cruel proved
For such fair love and faith, I now will say;
And you with lips comprest and eye-brows bent,
Shall listen to the tale for wonderment;

V.

And when you shall have heard the impiety,
Which of such passing goodness was the meed,
Woman take warning from this perfidy,
And let none make a lover's word her creed.
Mindless that God does all things hear and see,
The lover, eager his desires to speed,
Heaps promises and vows, aye prompt to swear,
Which afterwards all winds disperse in air.

VI.

The promises and empty vows dispersed
In air, by winds all dissipated go,
After these lovers have the greedy thirst
Appeased, with which their fevered palates glow.
In this example which I offer, versed,
Their prayers and tears to credit be more slow.
Cheaply, dear ladies mine, is wisdom bought
By those who wit at other's cost are taught.

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VII.

Of those in the first flower of youth beware,
Whose visage is so soft and smooth to sight:
For past, as soon as bred, their fancies are;
Like a straw-fire their every appetite.
So the keen hunter follows up the hare
In heat and cold, on shore, or mountain-height;
Nor, when 'tis taken, more esteems the prize;
And only hurries after that which flies.

VIII.

Such is the practice of these striplings who,
What time you treat them with austerity,
Love and revere you, and such homage do,
As those who pay their service faithfully;
But vaunt no sooner victory, than you
From mistresses shall servants grieve to be;
And mourn to see the fickle love they owed,
From you diverted, and elsewhere bestowed.

IX.

I not for this (for that were wrong) opine
That you should cease to love; for you, without
A lover, like uncultivated vine,
Would be, that has no prop to wind about.
But the first down I pray you to decline,
To fly the volatile, inconstant rout;
To make your choice the riper fruits among,
Nor yet to gather what too long has hung.

X.

A daughter they have found (above was said)
Of the proud king who ruled the Friesland state;
That with Bireno's brother was to wed,
As far as rumour tells; but to relate
The truth, a longing in Bireno bred
The sight of food so passing delicate;
And he to balk his palate deemed would be,
For other's sake, a foolish courtesy.

XI.

The gentle damsel had not past fourteen,
Was beautiful and fresh, and like a rose,
When this first opening from its bud is seen,
And with the vernal sun expands and grows.
To say Bireno loved the youthful queen
Were little; with less blaze lit tinder glows,
Or ripened corn, wherever envious hand
Of foe amid the grain has cast a brand,

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XII.

Than that which on Bireno's bosom fed,
And to his marrow burned; when, weeping sore
The fate of her unhappy father dead,
He saw her bathed in ceaseless tears deplore:
And, as cold water, on the cauldron shed,
Stops short the bubbling wave, which boiled before;
So was the raging fire Olympia blew
Within his breast, extinguished by a new.

XIII.

Nor feels Bireno mere satiety;
He loaths her so, he ill endures her sight;
And, if his hope be long deferred, will die:
For other such his fickle appetite!
Yet till the day prefixed to satisfy
His fond desire, so feigns the wary knight,
Olympia less to love than to adore
He seems, and but her pleasure to explore.

XIV.

And if the other he too much caress,
Who cannot *but* caress her, there are none
See evil in the deed, but rather guess
It is in pity, is in goodness done:
Since to raise up and comfort in distress
Whom Fortune's wheel beats down in changeful run,
Was never blamed; with glory oftener paid;
—So much the more, a young—a harmless maid.

XV.

Almighty God! how fallible and vain
Is human judgment, dimmed by clouds obscure!
Bireno's actions, impious and profane,
By others are reputed just and pure.
Already stooping to their oars, the train
Have loosed his vessel from the port secure,
And with the duke and his companions steer
For Zealand through the deep, with merry cheer.

XVI.

Already Holland and its headlands all
Are left astern, and now descried no more;
Since to shun Friesland they to larboard hawl,
And keep their course more nigh the Scottish shore:
When they are overtaken by a squall,
And drive three days the open sea before:
Upon the third, when now, near eventide,
A barren and unpeopled isle is spied.

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XVII.

As soon as they were harboured in a bight,
Olympia landed and the board was spread;
She there contented, with the faithless knight,
Supt, unsuspecting any cause for dread.
Thence, with Bireno, where a tent was pight
In pleasant place, repaired, and went to bed.
The others of their train returned aboard,
And rested in their ship, in haven moored.

XVIII.

The fear and late sea-sorrow, which had weighed
So long upon the dame and broke her rest,
The finding herself safe in greenwood shade
Removed from noise, and, for her tranquil breast
(Knowing her lover was beside her laid)
No further thoughts, no further cares molest,
Olympia lap in slumber so profound,
No sheltered bear or dormouse sleeps more sound.

XIX.

The lover false, who, hatching treason lies,
Stole from his bed in silence, when he knew
She slept: his clothes he in a bundle ties,
Nor other raiment on his body threw.
Then issuing forth from the pavilion hies,
As if on new-born wings, towards his crew;
Who, roused, unmoor without a cry, as he
Commands, and loosen thence and put to sea.

XX.

Behind the land was left; and there to pine
Olympia, who yet slept the woods among;
Till from her gilded wheels the frosty rhine
Aurora upon earth beneath had flung;
And the old woe, beside the tumbling brine,
Lamenting, halcyons mournful descant sung;[1]
When she, 'twixt sleep and waking, made a strain
To reach her loved Bireno, but in vain.

XXI.

She no one found; the dame her arm withdrew;
She tried again, yet no one found; she spread
Both arms, now here, now there, and sought anew;
Now either leg; but yet no better sped.
Fear banished sleep; she oped her eyes: in view
Was nothing: she no more her widowed bed
Would keep, but from the couch in fury sprung,
And headlong forth from the pavilion flung,

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XXII.

And seaward ran, her visage tearing sore,
Presaging, and now certain of her plight:
She beat her bosom, and her tresses tore,
And looked (the moon was shining) if she might
Discover any thing beside the shore;
Nor, save the shore, was any thing in sight.
She calls Bireno, and the caverns round,
Pitying her grief, Bireno's name rebound.

XXIII.

On the far shore there rose a rock; below
Scooped by the breakers beating frequently:
The cliff was hollowed underneath, in show
Of arch, and overhung the foaming sea.
Olympia (MIND such vigour did bestow)
Sprang up the frowning crest impetuously,
And, at a distance, stretched by favouring gale,
Thence saw her cruel lord's departing sail:

XXIV.

Saw it, or seemed to see: for ill her eyes,
Things through the air, yet dim and hazy, view.
She falls, all-trembling, on the ground, and lies
With face than snow more cold and white in hue:
But when she has again found strength to rise,
Guiding her voice towards the bark which flew,
Calling with all her might, the unhappy dame
Calls often on her cruel consort's name.

XXV.

Where unavailing was the feeble note,
She wept and clapt her hands in agony?
"Without its freight," she cried, "thy ship does float.
"—Where, cruel, dost thou fly [10] so swiftly?—me
"Receive as well:—small hinderance to thy boat,
"Which bears my spirit, would my body be."
And she her raiment waving in her hand,
Signed to the frigate to return to land.

XXVI.

But the loud wind which sweeping ocean, bears
The faithless stripling's sail across the deep,
Bears off as well the shriek, and moan, and prayers
Of sad Olympia, sorrowing on the steep.
Thrice, cruel to herself, the dame prepares
From the high rock amid the waves to leap.
But from the water lifts at length her sight,
And there returns where she had passed the night.

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XXVII.

Stretched on the bed, upon her face she lay,
Bathing it with her tears. "Last night in thee
"Together two found shelter," did she say;
"Alas! why two together are not we
"At rising? False Bireno! cursed day
"That I was born! What here remains to me
"To do? What can be done?—alone, betrayed—
"Who will console me, who afford me aid?

XXVIII.

"Nor man I see, nor see I work, which shows
"That man inhabits in this isle; nor I
"See ship, in which (a refuge from my woes),
"Embarking, I from hence may hope to fly.
"Here shall I starve; nor any one to close
"My eyes, or give me sepulture, be by,
"Save wolf perchance, who roves this wood, a tomb
"Give me, alas! in his voracious womb.

XXIX.

"I live in terror, and appear to see
"Rough bear or lion issue even now,
"Or tiger, from beneath the greenwood tree,
"Or other beast with teeth and claws: but how
"Can ever cruel beast inflict on me,
"O cruel beast, a fouler death than thou?
"Enough for them to slay me once! while I
"Am made by thee a thousand deaths to die.

XXX.

"But grant, e'en now, some skipper hither fare,
"Who may for pity bear me hence away;
"And that I so eschew wolf, lion, bear,
"Torture, and dearth, and every horrid way
"Of death; to Holland shall he take me, where
"For thee is guarded fortilage and bay;
"Or take me to the land where I was born,
"If this thou hast from me by treachery torn?

XXXI.

"Thou, with pretence, from me my state didst wrest
"Of our connection and of amity;
"And quickly of my land thy troops possest,
"To assure the rule unto thyself. Shall I
"Return to Flanders where I sold the rest,
"Though little, upon which I lived, to buy
"Thee needful succour and from prison bear?
"Wretch, whither shall I go?—I know not where.

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XXXII.

"Can I to Friesland go, where I to reign
"As queen was called, and this for thee forewent;
"Where both my brethren and my sire were slain,
"And every other good from me was rent?—
"Thee would I not, thou ingrate, with my pain
"Reproach, nor therefore deal thee punishment:
"As well as I, the story dost thou know;
"Now, see the meed thou dost for this bestow!

XXXIII.

"Oh! may I but escape the wild corsair,
"Nor taken be, and after sold for slave!
"Rather than this may lion, wolf, or bear,
"Tiger, or other beast, if fiercer rave,
"Me with his claws and tushes rend and tear,
"And drag my bleeding body to his cave."
So saying she her golden hair offends,
And lock by lock the scattered tresses rends.

XXXIV.

She to the shore's extremest verge anew,
Tossing her head, with hair dishevelled, run;
And seemed like maid beside herself, and who
Was by ten fiends possessed, instead of one;
Or like the frantic Hecuba, at view
Of murdered Polydore, her infant son;
Fixed on a stone she gazed upon the sea,
Nor less than real stone seemed stone to be.

XXXV.

But let her grieve till my return. To show
Now of the child I wish: his weary way
Rogero, in the noon's intensest glow,
Takes by the shore: the burning sunbeams play
Upon the hill and thence rebound; below
Boils the white sand; while heated with the ray,
Little is wanting in that journey dire,
But that the arms he wears are all on fire.

XXXVI.

While to the warrior thirst and labour sore,
Still toiling through that heavy sand, as he
Pursued his path along the sunny shore,
Were irksome and displeasing company,
Beneath the shadow of a turret hoar,
Which rose beside the beach, amid the sea,
He found three ladies of Alcina's court,
As such distinguished by their dress and port.

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XXXVII.

Reclined on Alexandrian carpets rare[8]
The ladies joyed the cool in great delight;
About them various wines in vessels were,
And every sort of comfit nicely dight;
Fast by, and sporting with the ripple there,
Lay, waiting on their needs, a pinnace light,
Until a breeze should fill her sail anew:
For then no breath upon the waters blew.

XXXVIII.

They, who beheld along the shifting sand
Rogero wend, upon his way intent,
And saw thirst figured on his lips, and scanned
His troubled visage, all with sweat besprent,
Began to pray, 'on what he had in hand
'He would not show his heart so deeply bent,
'But that he in the cool and grateful shade
'Would rest his weary limbs, beside them laid.'

XXXIX.

To hold the stirrup one approaching near,
Would aid him to alight: the other bore
A cup of chrystal to the cavalier,
With foaming wine, which raised his thirst the more;
But to the music of their speech no ear
He lent, who weened if he his way forbore
For anything, each lett would time supply
To Alcina to arrive, who now was nigh.

XL.

Not so saltpetre fine and sulphur pure,
Touched with the fiery spark, blaze suddenly;
Not so loud ocean raves, when the obscure
Whirlwind descends and camps in middle sea,
As viewing thus the knight proceed secure
Upon his journey, and aware that he
Scorns them, who yet believe they beauteous are,
Kindled the third of those three damsels fair.

XLI.

As loud as she could raise her voice she said,
"Thou art not gentle, nor art thou a knight;
"And hast from other arms and horse conveyed,
"Which never could be thine by better right.
"So be thy theft, if well I guess, appaid
"By death, which this may worthily requite!
"Foul thief, churl, haughty ingrate, may I thee
"Burned, gibbeted, or cut in quarters see!"

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XLII.

Beside all these and more injurious cries,
Which the proud damsel at the warrior throws,
Though to her taunts Rogero nought replies,
Who weens small fame from such a contest flows;
She with her sisters to the frigate hies,
Which waits them, and aboard the tender goes;
And plying fast her oars, pursues the knight
Along the sandy beach, still kept in sight.

XLIII.

On him with threat and curse she ever cried;
Whose tongue collected still fresh cause for blame.
Meanwhile, where to the lovelier fairy's side
The passage lay across a straight, he came;
And there an ancient ferryman espied
Put from the other shore with punctual aim,
As if forewarned and well prepared, the seer
Waited the coming of the cavalier.

XLIV.

The ferryman put forth the Child to meet,
To bear him to a better shore rejoicing: he
Appeared as all benign and all discreet,
If of the heart the face is warranty.
Giving God thanks, Rogero took his seat,
Aboard the bark, and passed the quiet sea,
Discoursing with that ancient pilot, fraught
With wisdom, and by long experience taught.

XLV.

He praised Rogero much, that he had fled
In time from false Alcina, and before
To him the dame had given the chalice dread,
Her lover's final guerdon evermore.
Next that he had to Logistilla sped,
Where he should duly witness holy lore,
And beauty infinite and grace enjoy,
Which feed and nourish hearts they never cloy.

XLVI.

"Her shall you, struck with wonderment, revere,"
(He said), "when first you shall behold the fay;
"But better contemplate her lofty cheer,
"And you no other treasure shall appay.
"In this her love from other differs; fear
"And hope in other on the bosom prey:
"In hers Desire demands not aught beside,
"And with the blessing seen is satisfied.

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XLVII.

"You shall in nobler studies be professed,
"Tutored by her, than bath and costly fare,
"Song, dance, and perfumes; as how fashioned best,
"Your thoughts may tower more high than hawks in air;
"And how some of the glory of the blest
"You here may in the mortal body share."
So speaking, and yet distant from the shore,
To the safe bank approached the pilot hoar.

XLVIII.

When he beholds forth-issuing from the strand,
A fleet of ships, which all towards him steer.
With these came wronged Alcina, with a band
Of many vassals, gathered far and near;
To risk the ruin of herself and land,
Or repossess the thing she held so dear.
Love, no light cause, incites the dame aggrieved,
Nor less the bitter injury received.

XLIX.

Such choler she had never felt before
As that which now upon her bosom fed:
And hence she made her followers ply the oar
Till the white foam on either bank was shed
The deafening noise and din o'er sea and shore,
By echo every where repeated, spread.
"Now—now, Rogero, bare the magic shield,
"Or in the strife be slain, or basely yield:"

L.

Thus Logistilla's pilot; and beside,
So saying, seized the pouch, wherein was dight
The buckler, and the covering torn aside,
Exposed to open view the shining light.
The enchanted splendor, flashing far and wide,
So sore offends the adversaries' sight,
They from their vessels drop amazed and blind,
Tumbling from prow before, and poop behind.

LI.

One who stood sentry on the citadel
Descried the navy of the invading dame,
And backwards rang the castle larum-bell,
Whence speedy succours to the haven came.
The artillery rained like storm, whose fury fell
On all who would Rogero scathe and shame:
So that such aid was brought him in the strife
As saved the warrior's liberty and life.

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LII.

Four ladies are arrived upon the strand,
Thither by Logistilla sped in haste:
Leagued with the valiant Andronica stand
Fronesia sage, Dicilla good, and chaste
Sofrosina, who, as she has in hand
More than the others, 'mid the foremost placed,
Conspicuous flames. Forth issues from the fort
A matchless host, and files towards the port.

LIII.

Beneath the castle, safe from wind and swell,
Of many ships and stout, a squadron lay;
Which, in the harbour, at a sound from bell,—
A word, were fit for action, night or day;
And thus by land and sea was battle, fell
And furious, waged on part of either fay:
Whence was Alcina's realm turned upside down,
Of which she had usurped her sister's crown.

LIV.

Oh! of how many battles the success
Is different from what was hoped before!
Not only failed the dame to repossess,
As thought, her lover flying from her shore,
But out of ships, even now so numberless,
That ample ocean scarce the navy bore,
From all her vessels, to the flames a prey,
But with one bark escaped the wretched fay.

LV.

Alcina flies; and her sad troop around
Routed and taken, burnt or sunk, remains.
To have lost Rogero, sorrow more profound
Wakes in her breast than all her other pains;
And she in bitter tears for ever drowned,
Of the Child's loss by night and day complains;
And bent to end her woes, with many a sigh,
Often laments her that she cannot die.

LVI.

No fairy dies, or can, while overhead
The sun shall burn, or heavens preserve their stile,
Or Clotho had been moved to cut her thread,
Touched by such grief; or, as on funeral pile
Fair Dido, she beneath the steel had bled;
Or, haply, like the gorgeous Queen of Nile,
In mortal slumber would have closed her eye:
But fairies cannot at their pleasure die.

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LVII.

Return we, where eternal fame is due,
Leaving Alcina in her trouble sore:
I speak of valorous Rogero, who
Had disembarked upon the safer shore.
He turned his back upon the waters blue,
Giving God thanks for all with pious lore;
And on dry ground now landed, made repair
Towards the lofty castle planted there.

LVIII.

Than this a stronger or more bright in show
Was never yet before of mortal sight,
Or after, viewed; with stones the ramparts glow
More rich than carbuncle or diamond bright.
We of like gems discourse not here below,
And he who would their nature read aright
Must thither speed: none such elsewhere, I ween,
Except perhaps in heaven above, are seen.

LIX.

What gives to them superiority
O'er every other sort of gem, confessed,
Is, man in these his very soul may see;
His vices and his virtues see expressed.
Hence shall he after heed no flattery,
Nor yet by wrongful censure be depressed.
His form he in the lucid mirror eyes,
And by the knowledge of himself grows wise.

LX.

Their rays, which imitate the sunshine, fill
All round about with such a flood of light,
That he who has them, Phœbus, may at will
Create himself a day, in thy despite.
Nor only marvellous the gems; the skill
Of the artificer and substance bright
So well contend for mastery, of the two,
'Tis hard to judge where preference is due.

LXI.

On arches raised, whereon the firmament
Seemed to repose as props, so fair in show
Are lovely gardens, and of such extent,
As even would be hard to have below.
Clustering 'twixt lucid tower or battlement,
Green odoriferous shrubs are seen to grow,
Which through the summer and the winter shoot,
And teem with beauteous blossom and ripe fruit.

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LXII.

Never in any place such goodly tree
Is grown, except within these gardens fine;
Or rose, or violet of like quality,
Lilies, or amaranth, or jessamine.
Elsewhere it seems as if foredoomed to be
Born with one sun, to live and to decline,
Upon its widowed stalk the blossom dies,
Subject to all the changes of the skies.

LXIII.

But here the verdure still is permanent,
Still permanent the eternal blossoms are;
Not that kind nature, in her government,
So nicely tempers here the genial air,
But that, unheeding any influence lent
By planet, Logistilla's zeal and care
Ever keep fast (what may appear a thing
Impossible) her own perpetual spring.

LXIV.

That such a gentle lord had sought her rest,
Did much the prudent Logistilla please,
And she commanded he should be carest,
And all should seek to do him courtesies.
Sometime had Sir Astolpho been her guest,
Whom with a joyful heart Rogero sees.
There in few days resorted all the crew,
Changed by Melissa to their shapes anew.

LXV.

When they a day or more their weariness
Had eased, Rogero sought the prudent fay;
With him the duke Astolpho, who no less
Desired to measure back his western way.
Melissa was for both embassadress,
And for the warlike pair, with humble say
To favour, warn and help them, prayed the dame;
So that they might return from whence they came.

LXVI.

"I" (said the fay) "will think upon this need,
"And in two days the pair will expedite."
Then thought how good Rogero she should speed,
And afterwards how aid the English knight.*
She wills the first shall, on the griffin-steed,
To the Aquitanian shores direct his flight;
But first will fashion for the flying-horse
A bit, to guide him and restrain his course.

* Astolpho.

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LXVII.

She shows him what to do, if he on high
Would make him soar, or down to earth would bring;
And what, would he in circles make him fly,
Or swiftly speed, or pause upon the wing.
And all that skilful horsemen use to try
Upon plain ground, beneath her tutoring,
Rogero learned in air, and gained dominion
Over the griffin-steed of soaring pinion.

LXVIII.

When at all points Rogero was prepared,
He bade farewell to the protecting fay,
For ever to the loving knight endeared,
And issued from her realm upon his way.
I first of him, who on his journey fared
In happy hour, and afterwards shall say
Of the English knight, who spent more time and pain
Seeking the friendly court of Charlemagne.

LXIX.

Rogero thence departs; but as before
Takes not the way he took in his despite,
When him above the sea the courser bore,
And seldom was the land beneath in sight.
But taught to make him beat his wings and soar,
Here, there, as liked him best, with docile flight,
Returning, he another path pursued;
As Magi erst, who Herod's snare eschewed.

LXX.

Borne hither, good Rogero, leaving Spain,
Had sought, in level line, the Indian lands,
Where they are watered by the Eastern main;
Where the two fairies strove with hostile bands.
He now resolved to visit other reign
Than that where Æolus his train commands;
And finish so the round he had begun,
Circling the world beneath him like the sun.

LXXI.

Here he Catay, and there he Mangiane,
Passing the great Quinsay[4] beheld; in air
Above Imavus turned, and Sericane
Left on the right; and thence did ever bear
From the north Scythians to the Hyrcanian main:
So reached Sarmatia's distant land; and, where
Europe and Asia's parted climes divide,
Russ, Prussian, he and Pomeranian spied.

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LXXII.

Although the Child by every wish was pressed
Quickly to seek his Bradamant, yet he
With taste of roving round the world possest,
Would not desist from it, till Hungary
He had seen; and Polacks, Germans, and the rest
Should in his wide extended circuit see,
Inhabiting that horrid, northern land;
And came at last to England's farthest strand.

LXXIII.

Yet think not, sir, that in so long a flight,
The warrior is for ever on the wing.
Who lodges, housed in tavern every night,
As best he can, through his capacious ring.
So nights and days he passes: such delight
Prospects to him of land and ocean bring.
Arrived one morn nigh London-town, he stopt;
And over Thames the flying courser dropt.

LXXIV.

Where he in meadows to the city nigh
Saw troops of men at arms, and footmen spread;
Who, to the drum and trumpet marching by,
Divided into goodly bands, were led
Before Rinaldo, flower of chivalry;
He that (if you remember it) was said
To have been sent by Charlemagne, and made
His envoy to these parts in search of aid.

LXXV.

Rogero came exactly as the show
Of that fair host was made without the town,
And of a knight the occasion sought to know;
But from the griffin-horse first lighted down:
And he who courteous was, informed him how
Of kingdoms holding of the British crown,
English, Scotch, Irish, and the islands nigh,
Those many banners were, upreared on high:

LXXVI.

And added, 'Having ended this display
'Of arms, the troops would file towards the strand,
'Where vessels anchored in the harbour lay,
'Waiting to bear them to another land.
"The French besieged, rejoice in this array,
"And hope (he said) deliverance through the band.
"But that I may of all inform you well,
"I of each troop shall separately tell.

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LXXVII.

"Lo! where yon mighty banner planted stands,
"Which pards and flower-de-luces does unfold,
"That our great captain to the wind expands,
"Under whose ensign are the rest enrolled:
"The warrior's name, renowned throughout these lands,
"Is Leonetto, flower of all the bold;
"Lancaster's duke, and nephew to the king,
"Valiant in war, and wise in counselling.

LXXVIII.

"That next the royal gonfalon, which stirred
"By fluttering wind, is borne towards the mount,
"Which on green field, three pinions of a bird
"Bears argent, speaks Sir Richard, Warwick's count.
"The Duke of Gloucester's blazon is the third,
"Two antlers of a stag, and demi-front;
"The Duke of Clarence shows a torch, and he
"Is duke of York who bears that verdant tree.

LXXIX.

"Upon the Duke of Norfolk's gonfalon
"You see a lance into three pieces broke;
"The thunder on the Earl of Kent's; upon
"Pembroke's a griffin; underneath a yoke;
"In Essex's, conjoined, two snakes are shown:
"By yonder lifted balance is bespoke
"The Duke of Suffolk; and Northumbria's Earl
"A garland does on azure field unfurl.

LXXX.

"Arundel's Earl is yonder cavalier,
"Whose banner bears a foundering bark! In sight
"The next, is Berkeley's noble Marquis; near
"Are March and Richmond's Earls: the first on white
"Shows a cleft mount; a palm the second peer;
"A pine amid the waves the latter knight.
"The next of Dorset and Southampton's town,
"Are earls; this bears a car, and that a crown.

LXXXI.

"The valiant Raymond, Earl of Devon, bears
"The hawk, which spreads her wings above her nest;
"While or and sable he of Worcester wears:
"Derby's a dog, a bear is Oxford's crest.
"There, as his badge, a cross of chrystal rears
"Bath's wealthy prelate, camped among the rest.
"The broken seat on dusky field, next scan,
"Of Somerset's good duke, Sir Ariman.

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LXXXII.

"Forty-two thousand muster in array,
"The men at arms and mounted archers there.[5]
"By a hundred I misreckon not, or they,
"The fighting footmen, twice as many are.
"Those ensigns yellow, brown, and green, survey,
"And that striped blue and black. The foot repair
"Each to his separate flag where these are spread;
"By Godfrey, Henry, Hermant, Edward, led.

LXXXIII.

"The first is the Duke of Buckingham; and he,
"The next, is Henry, Earl of Salisbury;
"Old Hermant Aberga'nny holds in fee,
"That Edward is the Earl of Shrewsbury.
"In those who yonder lodge, the English see
"Camped eastward; and now westward turn your eye,
"Where you shall thirty thousand Scots, a crew
"Led by their monarch's son, Zerbino, view.

LXXXIV.

"The lion 'twixt two unicorns behold
"Upon the standard of the Scottish king!
"Which has a sword of silver in its hold.
"There camps his son: of all his following
"Is none so beauteous: nature broke the mould
"In which she cast him, after fashioning
"Her work: Is none in whom such chivalry
"And valour shines. The Duke of Rothsay he!

LXXXV.

"Behold the Earl of Huntley's flag display
"Upon an azure field a gilded bar:
"In that a leopard in the toils survey,
"The bearing of the noble Duke of Mar.
"With many birds and many colours gay,
"See Alcabrun's, a valiant man in war;
"Who neither duke, nor count, nor marquis hight,
"Is in his savage country first of right.[6]

LXXXVI.

"The Duke of Strathforth[7] shows the bird, who strains
"His daring eyes to keep the sun in view;
"The Earl Lurcanio, that in Angus reigns,
"A bull, whose flanks are torn by deerhounds two.
"See there the Duke of Albany, who stains
"His ensign's field with colours white and blue.
"The Earl of Buchan next his banner bears,
"In which a dragon *vert* a vulture tears.

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LXXXVII.

"Herman, the lord of Forbes, conducts that band,
"And stripes his gonfalon with black and white;
"With Errol's earl upon his better hand,
"Who on a field of green displays a light.
"Now see the Irish, next the level land,
"Into two squadrons ordered for the fight.
"Kildare's redoubted earl commands the first;
"Lord Desmond leads the next, in mountains nursed.

LXXXVIII.

"A burning pine by Kildare is displayed;
"By Desmond on white field a crimson bend.
"Nor only England, Scotland, Ireland, aid
"King Charlemagne; but to assist him wend
"The Swede and Norse, and succours are conveyed
"From Thulè, and the farthest Iceland's end.
"All lands that round them lie, in fine, increase
"His host, by nature enemies to peace.

LXXXIX.

"Issued from cavern and from forest brown,
"They sixteen thousand are, or little less;
"Visage, legs, arms, and bosom overgrown
"With hair, like beasts. Lo! yonder, where they press
"About a standard white, the level down
"Of lances seems a bristling wilderness.
"Such Moray's flag, the savage squadron's head,
"Who means with Moorish blood to paint it red."

XC.

What time Rogero sees the fair array,
Whose bands to succour ravaged France prepare,
And notes and talks of ensigns they display,
And names of British lords, to him repair
One and another, crowding to survey
His courser, single of its kind, or rare:
All thither hasten, wondering and astound,
And compassing the warrior, form a round.

XCI.

So that to raise more wonder in the train,
And to make better sport, as him they eyed,
Rogero shook the flying courser's rein,
And lightly with the rowels touched his side:
He towards heaven, uprising, soared amain,
And left behind each gazer stupefied.
Having from end to end the English force
So viewed, he next for Ireland shaped his course;

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XCII.

And saw the fabulous Hibernia, where
The goodly, sainted elder made the cave,[8]
In which men cleansed from all offences are;
Such mercy there, it seems, is found to save.
Thence o'er that sea he spurred, through yielding air,
Whose briny waves the lesser Britain lave;
And, looking down, Angelica descried
In passing, to the rock with fetters tied;

XCIII.

Bound to the naked rock upon the strand,
In the isle of tears; for the isle of tears was hight,
That which was peopled by the inhuman band,
So passing fierce and full of foul despite;
Who (as I told above) on every hand
Cruized with their scattered fleet by day or night;
And every beauteous woman bore away,
Destined to be a monster's evil prey:

XCIV.

There but that morning bound in cruel wise;
Where (to devour a living damsel sped)
The orc, that measureless sea-monster, hies,
Which on abominable food is fed.
How on the beach the maid became the prize
Of the rapacious crew, above was said,
Who found her sleeping near the enchanter hoar,
Who her had thither brought by magic lore.

XCV.

The cruel and inhospitable crew
To the voracious beast the dame expose
Upon the sea-beat shore, as bare to view
As nature did at first her work compose.
Not even a veil she has, to shade the hue
Of the white lily and vermillion rose,
Which mingled in her lovely members meet,
Proof to December-snow and July-heat.

XCVI.

Her would Rogero have some statue deemed
Of alabaster made, or marble rare,
Which to the rugged rock so fastened seemed
By the industrious sculptor's cunning care,
But that he saw distinct a tear which streamed
Amid fresh-opening rose and lily fair,
Stand on her budding paps beneath in dew,
And that her golden hair dishevelled flew.

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XCVII.

And as he fastened *his* on *her* fair eyes,
His Bradamant he called to mind again.
Pity and love within his bosom rise
At once, and ill he can from tears refrain:
And in soft tone he to the damsel cries,
(When he has checked his flying courser's rein)
"O lady, worthy but that chain to wear,
"With which Love's faithful servants fettered are,

XCVIII.

"And most unworthy this or other ill,
"What wretch has had the cruelty to wound
"And gall those snowy hands with livid stain,
"Thus painfully with griding fetters bound?"
At this she cannot choose but show like grain,
Of crimson spreading on an ivory ground;
Knowing those secret beauties are espied,
Which, howsoever lovely, shame would hide;

XCIX.

And gladly with her hands her face would hood,
Were they not fastened to the rugged stone:
But with her tears (for this at least she could)
Bedewed it, and essayed to hold it down.
Sobbing some while the lovely damsel stood;
Then loosed her tongue and spake in feeble tone;
But ended not; arrested in mid-word,
By a loud noise which in the sea was heard.

C.

Lo! and behold! the unmeasured-beast appears,
Half surging and half hidden, in such sort
As sped by roaring wind long carack steers
From north or south, towards her destined port.
So the sea monster to his food repairs:
And now the interval between is short.
Half dead the lady is through fear endured,
Ill by that other's comfort reassured.

CI.

Rogero overhand, not in the rest
Carries his lance, and beats, with downright blow,
The monstrous orc. What this resembled best,
But a huge, writhing mass, I do not know;
Which wore no form of animal exprest,
Save in the head, with eyes and teeth of sow
His forehead, 'twixt the eyes, Rogero smites,
But as on steel or rock the weapon lights.

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CII.

When he perceives the first of no avail,
The knight returns to deal a better blow;
The orc, who sees the shifting shadow sail
Of those huge pinions on the sea below,
In furious heat, deserts his sure regale
On shore, to follow that deceitful show:
And rolls and reels behind it, as it fleets.
Rogero drops, and oft the stroke repeats.

CIII.

As eagle, that amid her downward flight,
Surveys amid the grass a snake unrolled,
Or where she smoothes upon a sunny height,
Her ruffled plumage, and her scales of gold,
Assails it not where prompt with poisonous bite
To hiss and creep; but with securer hold
Gripes it behind, and either pinion clangs,
Lest it should turn and wound her with its fangs;

CIV.

So the fell orc Rogero does not smite
With lance or faulchion where the tushes grow,
But aims that 'twixt the ears his blow may light;
Now on the spine, or now on tail below.
And still in time descends or soars upright,
And shifts his course, to cheat the veering foe:
But as if beating on a jasper block,
Can never cleave the hard and rugged rock.

CV.

With suchlike warfare is the mastiff vext
By the bold fly in August's time of dust,
Or in the month before or in the next,
This full of yellow spikes and that of must;
For ever by the circling plague perplext,
Whose sting into his eyes or snout is thrust:
And oft the dog's dry teeth are heard to fall;
But reaching once the foe, he pays for all.

CVI.

With his huge tail the troubled waves so sore
The monster beats, that they ascend heaven-high;
And the knight knows not if he swim, or soar
Upon his feathered courser in mid sky;
And oft were fain to find himself ashore:
For, if long time the spray so thickly fly,
He fears it so will bathe his hippogryph,
That he shall vainly covet gourd or skiff.[9]

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CVII.

He then new counsel took, and 'twas the best,
With other arms the monster to pursue;
And lifting from his shield the covering vest,
To dazzle with the light his blasted view.
Landward towards the rock-chained maid he pressed,
And on her little finger, lest a new
Mischance should follow, slipt the ring, which brought
The enchantment of the magic shield to nought.

CVIII.

I say the ring, which Bradamant, to free
Rogero, from Brunello's hand had rent,
And which, to snatch him from Alcina, she
Had next to India by Melissa sent.
Melissa (as before was said by me),
In aid of many used the instrument;
And to Rogero this again had born;
By whom 'twas ever on his finger worn.

CIX.

He gave it now Angelica; for he
Feared lest the buckler's light should be impaired,
And willed as well those beauteous eyes should be
Defended, which had him already snared.
Pressing beneath his paunch full half the sea,
Now to the shore the monstrous whale repaired:
Firm stood Rogero, and the veil undone,
Appeared to give the sky another sun.

CX.

He in the monster's eyes the radiance throws,
Which works as it was wont in other time.
As trout or grayling to the bottom goes
In stream, which mountaineer disturbs with lime;
So the enchanted buckler overthrows
The orc, reversed among the foam and slime.
Rogero here and there the beast astound
Still beats, but cannot find the way to wound.

CXI.

This while the lady begs him not to bray
Longer the monster's rugged scale in vain.
"For heaven's sake turn and loose me" (did she say,
Still weeping) "ere the orc awake again.
"Bear me with thee, and drown me in mid-way.
"Let me not this foul monster's food remain."
By her just plaint Rogero moved, forbore,
Untied the maid, and raised her from the shore.

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CXII.

Upon the beach the courser plants his feet,
And goaded by the rowel, towers in air,
And gallops with Rogero in mid seat,
While on the croup behind him sate the fair;
Who of his banquet so the monster cheat;
For him too delicate and dainty fare.
Rogero turns and with thick kisses plies
The lady's snowy breast and sparkling eyes.

CXIII.

He kept no more the way, as he before
Proposed, for compassing the whole of Spain:
But stopt his courser on the neighbouring shore
Where lesser Britain runs into the main.
Upon the bank there rose an oakwood hoar,
Where Philomel for ever seemed to plain;
I'the middle was a meadow with a fountain,
And, at each end, a solitary mountain.

CXIV.

'Twas here the wishful knight first checked the rein,
And dropping in the meadow, made his steed
Furl, yet not shut so close, his wings again,
As he had spread them wide for better speed.
Down lights Rogero, and forbears with pain
From other leap; but this his arms impede:
His arms impede; a bar to his desire,
And he must doff them would he slake the fire.

CXV.

Now here, now there, confused by different thong,
Rogero did his shining arms undo:
Never the task appeared to him so long;
For where he loosed one knot, he fastened two.
But, sir, too long continued is this song,
And haply may as well have wearied you;
So that I shall delay to other time,
When it may better please, my tedious rhyme.

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CANTO XI.

ARGUMENT.

Assisted by the magic ring she wears,
Angelica evanishes from view.
Next in a damsel, whom a giant bears
Beneath his arm, his bride Rogero true
Beholds. Orlando to the shore repairs,
Where the fell orc so many damsels slew;
Olympia frees, and spoils the beast of life:
Her afterwards Oberto takes to wife.

I.

ALTHOUGH a feeble rein, in mid career,
Will oft suffice to stop courageous horse;
'Tis seldom Reason's bit will serve to steer
Desire, or turn him from his furious course,
When pleasure is in reach: like headstrong bear,
Whom from the honeyed meal 'tis ill to force,
If once he scent the tempting mess, or sup
A drop, which hangs upon the luscious cup.

II.

What reason then Rogero shall withhold
From taking with Angelica delight,—
That gentle maid, there naked in his hold,
In the lone forest, and secure from sight?
Of Bradamant he thinks not, who controlled
His bosom erst: and foolish were the knight,
If thinking of *that* damsel as before,
By *this* he had not set an equal store;

III.

Warmed by whose youthful beauties, the severe
Xenocrates would not have been more chaste.[1]
The impatient Child had dropt both shield and spear,
And hurrying now his other arms uncased;
When, casting down her eyes in shame and fear,
The virtuous ring upon her finger placed,
Angelica descried, and which of yore
From her Brunello in Albracca bore.

IV.

This is the ring she carried into France,[2]
When thither first the damsel took her way;
With her the brother, bearer of the lance,
After, the paladin, Astolpho's prey.
With this she Malagigi's spells and trance
Made vain by Merlin's stair; and on a day
Orlando freed, with many knights and good,
From Dragontina's cruel servitude:

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V.

With this passed viewless from the turret-cell,
Where her that bad old man had mewed; but why
Recount its different wonders, if as well
You know the virtues of the ring as I?
From her this even in her citadel,
His monarch Agramant to satisfy,
Brunello took: since when she had been crost
By Fortune, till her native realm was lost.

VI.

Now that she this upon her hand surveys,
She is so full of pleasure and surprise,
She doubts it is a dream, and, in amaze,
Hardly believes her very hand and eyes.
Then softly to her mouth the hoop conveys,
And, quicker than the flash which cleaves the skies,
From bold Rogero's sight her beauty shrowds,
As disappears the sun, concealed in clouds.

VII.

Yet still Rogero gazed like wight distraught,
And hurried here and there with fruitless speed:
But when he had recalled the ring to thought,
Foiled and astounded, cursed his little heed.
And now the vanished lady, whom he sought,
Of that ungrateful and discourteous deed
Accusing stood, wherewith she had repaid,
(Unfitting recompense) his generous aid,

VIII.

"Ungrateful damsel! and is this the pay
"You render for the service done?" (said he)
"Why rather would you steal my ring away
"Than have it as a welcome gift from me?
"Not only this, (but use me as you may)
"I, and my shield and courser, yours shall be;
"So you no more conceal your beauteous cheer.
"Cruel, though answering not, I know you hear."

IX.

So saying, like one blind, with bootless care,
Feeling his way about the fount he strayed.
How often he embraced the empty air,
Hoping in this to have embraced the maid!
Meanwhile, now far removed, the flying fair
Had halted not, till to a cave conveyed.
Formed in a mountain was that harbour rude,
Spacious, and for her need supplied with food.

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X.

'Twas here an aged herdsman, one who tended
A numerous troop of mares, had made his won:
These, seeking pasture, through the valley wended,
Where the green grass was fed by freshening run:
While stalls on either side the cave, defended
His charge from the oppressive noon-tide sun;
Angelica, within, that livelong day,
Unseen of prying eyes, prolonged her stay;

XI.

And about evening, when refreshed with rest
And food, she deemed her course she might renew;
In certain rustic weeds her body dressed:
How different from those robes of red, or blue,
Green, yellow, purple, her accustomed vest,
So various in its fashion, shape, and hue!
Yet her not so that habit misbecame,
But that she looked the fair and noble dame.

XII.

Then Phillis' and Neæra's praise forbear,
And ye who sing of Amaryllis cease,
Or flying Galatæa,[3] not so fair,
Tityrus and Melibæus, with your peace!
'Twas here the beauteous lady took a mare,
Which liked her best, of all that herd's increase.
Then, and then first conceived the thought, again
To seek in the Levant her ancient reign.

XIII.

This while Rogero, after he had passed
Long space in hope the maid might re-appear,
Awakened from his foolish dream at last,
And found she was not nigh, and did not hear.
Then to remount his griffin-courser cast,
In earth and air accustomed to career.
But, having slipt his bit, the winged horse
Had towered and soared in air a freer course.

XIV.

To his first ill addition grave and sore
Was to have lost the bird of rapid wing,
Which he no better than the mockery bore
Put on him by the maid; but deeper sting
Than this or that, implants, and pains him more,
The thought of having lost the precious ring;
Not for its power so much, esteemed above
Its worth, as given him by his lady-love.

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XV.

Afflicted beyond measure, he, with shield
Cast on his shoulder, and new-cased in mail,
Left the sea-side, and through a grassy field
Pursued his way, towards a spacious vale:
Where he beheld a path, by wood concealed,
The widest and most beaten in the dale.
Nor far had wound the closest shades within,
Ere on his right he heard a mighty din.

XVI.

He heard a din, and fearful clashing sound
Of arms, and hurrying on with eager pace
'Twixt tree and tree, two furious champions found,
Waging fierce fight in close and straightened place:
Who to each other (warring on what ground
I know not) neither showed regard nor grace.
The one a giant was of haughty cheer,
And one a bold and gallant cavalier.

XVII.

Covered with shield and sword, one, leaping, sped
Now here now there, and thus himself defended,
Lest a two-handed mace upon his head
Should fall, with which the giant still offended:—
On the field lay his horse, already dead.
Rogero paused, and to the strife attended:
And straight his wishes leant towards the knight,
Whom he would fain see conqueror in the fight:

XVIII.

Yet not for this would lend the champion aid,
But to behold the cruel strife stood nigh.
Lo! a two-handed stroke the giant made
Upon the lesser warrior's casque, and by
The mighty blow the knight was overlaid:
The other, when astound he saw him lie,
To deal the foe his death, his helm untied,
So that the warrior's face Rogero spied.

XIX.

Of his sweet lady, of his passing fair,
And dearest Bradamant Rogero spies
The lovely visage, of its helmet bare;
Towards whom, to deal her death, the giant hies:
So that, advancing with his sword in air,
To sudden battle him the Child defies.
But he, who will not wait for new alarm,
Takes the half-lifeless lady in his arm.

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XX.

And on his shoulder flings and bears away;
As sometimes wolf a little lamb will bear,
Or eagle in her crooked claws convey
Pigeon, or such-like bird, through liquid air.
Rogero runs with all the speed he may,
Who sees how needed is his succour there.
But with such strides the giant scours the plain,
Him with his eyes the knight pursues with pain.

XXI.

This flying and that following, the two
Kept a close path which widened still, and they
Piercing that forest, issued forth to view
On a wide meadow, which without it lay.
—No more of this. Orlando I pursue,
That bore Cymosco's thunder-bolt away;
And this had in the deepest bottom drowned,
That never more the mischief might be found.

XXII.

But with small boot: for the impious enemy
Of human nature, taught the bolt to frame,
After the shaft, which darting from the sky
Pierces the cloud and comes to ground in flame,
Who, when he tempted Eve to eat and die
With the apple, hardly wrought more scathe and shame,
Some deal before, or in our grandsires' day,
Guided a necromancer where it lay.

XXIII.

More than a hundred fathom buried so,
Where hidden it had lain a mighty space,
The infernal tool by magic from below
Was fished and born amid the German race;
Who, by one proof and the other, taught to know
Its powers, and he who plots for our disgrace,
The demon, working on their weaker wit,
At last upon its fatal purpose hit.

XXIV.

To Italy and France,[4] on every hand
The cruel art among all people past;
And these the bronze in hollow mould expand,
First in the furnace melted by the blast:
Others the iron bore, and small or grand,
Fashion the various tube they pierce or cast.
And bombard,[5] gun, according to its frame,
Or single cannon this, or double, name.

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XXV.

This saker, culverine, or falcon's hight,
I hear (all names the inventor has bestowed):
Which splits or shivers steel and stone outright,
And, where the bullet passes, makes a road.
—Down to the sword, restore thy weapons bright,
Sad soldier, to the forge, a useless load;
And gun or carbine on thy shoulder lay,
Who without these, I wot, shalt touch no pay.

XXVI.

How, foul and pestilent discovery,
Didst thou find place within the human heart?
Through thee is martial glory lost, through thee
The trade of arms become a worthless art:
And at such ebb are worth and chivalry,
That the base often plays the better part.
Through thee no more shall gallantry, no more
Shall valour prove their prowess as of yore.

XXVII.

Through thee, alas! are dead, or have to die,
So many noble lords and cavaliers
Before this war shall end, which, Italy
Afflicting most, has drowned the world in tears,
That, if I said the word, I err not, I,
Saying he sure the cruellest appears
And worst, of nature's impious and malign,
Who did this hateful engine first design:

XXVIII.

And I shall think, in order to pursue
The sin for ever, God has doomed to hell
That cursed soul, amid the unhappy crew,
Beside the accursed Judas there to dwell.
But follow we the good Orlando, who
So burns to seek Ebuda's island fell,
Whose foul inhabitants a monster sate
With flesh of women, fair and delicate.

XXIX.

But no less slow than eager was the knight;
The winds appear, which still his course delay;
Who, whether blowing on the left or right,
Or poop, so faintly in his canvas play,
His bark makes little speed; and, spent outright,
The breeze which wafts her sometimes dies away,
Or blows so foul, that he is fain to steer
Another course, or to the leeward veer.

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XXX.

It was the will of Heaven that he, before
The King of Ireland, should not reach the land,
That he with greater ease upon that shore
Might act what shortly you shall understand.
"Make for the isle. Now" (said he) "may'st thou moor,"
(Thus issuing to the pilot his command),
"And give me for my need the skiff; for I
"Will to the rock without more company.

XXXI.

"The biggest cable that thou hast aboard,
"And biggest anchor to my hands consign;
"Thou shalt perceive why thus my boat is stored,
"If I but meet that monster of the brine."
He bade them lower the pinnace overboard,
With all things that befitted his design:
His arms he left behind, except his blade,
And singly for the rocky island made.

XXXII.

Home to his breast the count pulls either oar,
With the island at his back, to which he wends,
In guise that, crawling up the sandy shore,
The crooked crab from sea or marsh ascends.
It was the hour Aurora gay before
The rising sun her yellow hair extends
(His orb as yet half-seen, half-hid from sight)
Not without stirring jealous Tithon's spite.

XXXIII.

Approaching to the naked rock as near
As vigorous hand might serve to cast a stone,
He knew not if he heard, or did not hear
A cry, so faint and feeble was the moan.
When, turning to the left, the cavalier,
His level sight along the water thrown,
Naked as born, bound to a stump, espied
A dame, whose feet were wetted by the tide.

XXXIV.

Because she distant is, and evermore
Holds down her face, he ill can her discern:
Both sculls he pulls amain, and nears the shore,
With keen desire more certain news to learn:
But now the winding beach is heard to roar,
And wood and cave the mighty noise return;
The billows swell, and, lo! the beast! who pressed,
And nigh concealed the sea beneath his breast.

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XXXV.

As cloud from humid vale is seen to rise,
Pregnant with rain and storm, which seems withal
To extinguish day, and charged with deeper dyes
Than night, to spread throughout this earthly ball,
So swims the beast, who so much occupies.
Of sea, he may be said to keep it all.
Waves roar: collected in himself, the peer
Looks proudly on, unchanged in heart and cheer.

XXXVI.

He, as one well resolved in his intent,
Moved quickly to perform the feat he planned;
And, for he would the damsel's harm prevent,
And would with that assail the beast at hand,
Between her and the orc the boat he sent,
Leaving within the sheath his idle brand.
Anchor and cable next he takes in hold,
And waits the foe with constant heart and bold.

XXXVII.

As soon as him the monster has descried,
And skiff at little interval, his throat
The fish, to swallow him, expands so wide,
That horse and horseman through his jaws might float.
Here Roland with the anchor, and beside
(Unless I am mistaken) with the boat
Plunged, and engulphed the parted teeth betwixt,
His anchor in the tongue and palate fixt;

XXXVIII.

So that the monster could no longer drop
Or raise his horrid jaws, which this extends.
'Tis thus who digs the mine is wont to prop
The ground, and where he works the roof suspends,
Lest sudden ruin whelm him from atop,
While he incautiously his task intends.
Roland (so far apart was either hook)
But by a leap could reach the highest crook.

XXXIX.

The prop so placed, Orlando now secure
That the fell beast his mouth no more can close,
Unsheathes his sword, and, in that cave obscure,
Deals here and there, now thrusts, now trenchant blows.
As well as citadel, whose walls immure
The assailants, can defend her from her foes,
The monster, harassed by the war within,
Defends himself against the Paladin.

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XL.

Now floats the monstrous beast, o'ercome with pain,
Whose scaly flanks upon the waves expand;
And now descends into the deepest main,
Scowers at the bottom, and stirs up the sand.
The rising flood ill able to sustain,
The cavalier swims forth, and makes for land.
He leaves the anchor fastened in his tongue,
And grasps the rope which from the anchor hung.

XLI.

So swimming till the island is attained,
With this towards the rock Orlando speeds:
He hawls the anchor home (a footing gained),
Pricked by whose double fluke, the monster bleeds.
The labouring orc to follow is constrained,
Dragged by that force which every force exceeds:
Which at a single sally more achieves
Than at ten turns the circling windlass heaves.

XLII.

As a wild bull, about whose horn is wound
The unexpected noose, leaps here and there,
When he has felt the cord, and turns him round,
And rolls and rises, yet slips not the snare;
So from his pleasant seat and ancient bound,
Dragged by that arm and rope he cannot tear,
With thousands of strange wheels and thousand slides,
The monster follows where the cable guides.

XLIII.

This the red sea with reason would be hight
To-day, such streams of blood have changed its hue;
And where the monster lashed it in his spite,
The eye its bottom through the waves might view.
And now he splashed the sky, and dimmed the light
Of the clear sun, so high the water flew.
The noise re-echoing round, the distant shore
And wood and hill rebound the deafening roar.

XLIV.

Forth from his grotto aged Proteus hies,
And mounts above the surface at the sound;
And having seen Orlando dive, and rise
From the orc, and drag the monstrous fish to ground,
His scattered flock forgot, o'er ocean flies;
While so the din increases, that, astound,
Neptune bids yoke his dolphins, and that day
For distant Æthiopia posts away.[6]

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XLV.

With Melicerta on her shoulders, weeping
Ino,[7] and Nereids with dishevelled hair,
The Glauci, Tritons, and their fellows, leaping
They know not whither, speed, some here, some there.
Orlando draws to land, the billows sweeping,
That horrid fish, but might his labour spare:
For, with the torment worn, and travel sore,
The brute, exhausted, died ere dragged ashore.

XLVI.

Of the islanders had trooped no petty throng,
To witness that strange fight, who by a vain
And miserable superstition stung,
Esteemed such holy deed a work profane;
And said 'that this would be another wrong
'To Proteus, and provoke his ire again;
'Make him his herds pour forth upon the strand,
'And with the whole old warfare vex the land;

XLVII.

'And that it better were to sue for peace,
'First from the injured god, lest worse ensue;
'And Proteus from his cruel hate would cease,
'If they into the sea the offender threw.'
As torch to torch gives fire, and lights increase,
Until the flame is spread the country through,
Even so from heart to heart the fury spread,
Which in the waves would doom Orlando dead.

XLVIII.

These, armed with sling or bow, upon the shore,
And these supplied with spear or sword descend;
And on each side, behind him and before,
Distant and near, as best they can, offend.
At such a brutal insult wonders sore
The peer, who sees that mischief they intend,
In vengeance for the cruel monster slain,
Whence he had glory hoped, and praise to gain.

XLIX.

But as the usage is of surly bear,
By sturdy Russ or Lithuanian led,
Little to heed the dogs in crowded fair,
Nor even at their yelps to turn his head,
The clamour of the churls assembled there
Orlando witnessed with as little dread;
Who knew that he the rout which threatened death,
Had power to scatter at a single breath:

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L.

And speedily he made them yield him place,
When, turned on them, he grasped his trenchant blade.
Misjudging of his worth, the foolish race
Deemed that he would have short resistance made;
Since him they saw no covering buckler brace,
Uncuirassed, nor in other arms arrayed;
But knew not that, from head to foot, a skin
More hard than diamond cased the Paladin.

LI.

What by Orlando others cannot do,
The knight by others can: at half a score
Of blows in all he thirty killed; by few
He pass'd that measure, if the strokes were more:
And had already turned him to undo
The naked lady, having cleared the shore,
When other larum sounds, and other cries
From a new quarter of the island rise.

LII.

While so the Paladin had kept in play
The barbarous islanders, upon that hand,
The men of Ireland, without let or fray,
Had poured from many quarters on the strand:
And now, without remorse or pity, slay
The inhabitants, through all the wasted land;
And, was it justice moved, or cruel rage,
Slaughter without regard to sex or age.

LIII.

Little or no defence the island-crew
Attempt; in part as taken unaware,
In part that in the little place are few,
And that those few without a purpose are.
'Mid sack and fire, the wasted country through,
The islanders are slain, and everywhere
The walls are upon earth in ruin spread,
Nor in the land is left a living head.

LIV.

As if the mighty tumult which he hears,
And shriek and ruin had concerned him nought,
The naked rock the bold Orlando nears,
Where SHE was placed, to feed the monster brought.
He looks, and known to him the dame appears,
And more appears, when nigher her he sought:
Olympia she appears, and is indeed
Olympia, whose faith reaped so ill a meed.

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LV.

Wretched Olympia; whom, besides the scorn
Which Love put on her, Fortune too pursued,
Who sent the corsairs fell, which her had borne
That very day to the island of Ebude.
She Roland recollects on his return
Landward; but, for the damsel naked stood,
Not only nought she to the warrior said,
But dared not raise her eyes, and dropt her head.

LVI.

Orlando asks what evil destiny
Her to that cruel island had conveyed
From where she in as much felicity
Was with her consort left as could be said:
"I know not (cried the weeping dame) if I
"Have thanks to render thee for death delayed,
"Or should lament me that, through means of thee,
"This day did not my woes concluded see.

LVII.

"I have to thank thee that from death, too dread
"And monstrous, thy good arm deliverance gave;
"Which would have been too monstrous, had I fed
"The beast, and in his belly found a grave:
"But cannot thank thee that I am not dead,
"Since death alone can me from misery save.
"Well shall I thank thee for that wished relief
"Which can deliver me from every grief."

LVIII.

Next she related, with loud sobs and sighs,
How her false spouse betrayed her as she lay
Asleep, and how of pirates made the prize,
They bore her from the desert isle away.
And, as she spake, she turned her in the guise
Of Dian, framed by artists, who pourtray
Her carved or painted, as in liquid font
She threw the water in Actæon's front.

LIX.

For, as she can, her waist she hides, and breast,
More liberal of her flowing flank and reins.
Roland desires his ship, to find a vest
To cover her, delivered from her chains:
While he is all intent upon this quest,
Oberto comes; Oberto he that reigns
O'er Ireland's people, how had understood
How lifeless lay the monster of the flood;

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LX.

And, swimming, how, amid the watery roar,
A knight a weighty anchor in his throat
Had fix'd, and so had dragged him to the shore,
As men against the current track a boat.
This while Oberto comes; who, if his lore,
Who told the tale, were true, desires to note;
While his invading army, far and wide,
Ebuda burn and waste on every side.

LXI.

Oberto, though the Paladin to sight
Was dripping, and with water foul and gore;
With gore, that from the orc, emerged to light,
Whom he had entered bodily, he bore,
He for the county knew the stranger knight
As he perused his face; so much the more,
That he had thought when told the tidings, none
Save Roland could such mighty feat have done;

LXII.

Knew him, because a page of honour he
Had been in France,[8] and for the crown, his right
Upon his father's death, had crossed the sea
The year before. So often he the knight
Had seen, and had with him held colloquy,
Their times of meeting had been infinite.
He doffed his casque, with festive welcome pressed
Towards the count, and clasped him to the breast.

LXIII.

Orlando is no less rejoiced to see
The king, than is the king that champion true.
After with friendly cheer and equal glee
Had once or twice embraced the noble two,
To Oberto Roland told the treachery
Which had been done the youthful dame, and who
Had done it,—false Bireno—that among
All men should least have sought to do her wrong.

LXIV.

To him he told the many proofs and clear
By which the dame's affection had been tried;
And how she for Bireno kin and geer
Had lost, and would in fine for him have died.
And how he this could warrant, and appear
To vouch for much, as witness on her side.
While thus to him her griefs Orlando showed,
The lady's shining eyes with tears o'erflowed.

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LXV.

Her face was such as sometimes in the spring
We see a doubtful sky, when on the plain
A shower descends, and the sun, opening
His cloudy veil, looks out amid the rain.
And as the nightingale then loves to sing
From branch of verdant stem her dulcet strain,
So in her beauteous tears his pinions bright
Love bathes, rejoicing in the chrystal light.

LXVI.

The stripling heats his golden arrow's head
At her bright eyes, then slacks the weapon's glow
In streams, which fall between white flowers and red;
And, the shaft tempered, strongly draws his bow,
And roves at him, o'er whom no shield is spread,
Nor iron rind, nor double mail below;
Who, gazing on her tresses, eyes, and brow,
Feels that his heart is pierced, he knows not how.

LXVII.

Olympia's beauties are of those most rare,
Nor is the forehead's beauteous curve alone
Excellent, and her eyes and cheeks and hair,
Mouth, nose, and throat, and shoulders; but, so down
Descending from the lady's bosom fair,
Parts which are wont to be concealed by gown,
Are such, as haply should be placed before
Whate'er this ample world contains in store.

LXVIII.

In whiteness they surpass'd unsullied snow,
Smooth ivory to the touch; above were seen
Two rounding paps, like new-press'd milk in show,
Fresh-taken from its crate of rushes green;[9]
The space betwixt was like the valley low,
Which oftentimes we see small hills between,
Sweet in its season: and now such as when
Winter with snows has newly filled the glen.

LXIX.

The swelling hips and haunches' symmetry,
The waist more clear than mirror's polished grain,
And members seem of Phidias' turnery,
Or work of better hand and nicer pain.
As well to you of other parts should I
Relate, which she to hide desired in vain.
To sum the beauteous whole, from head to feet,
In her all loveliness is found complete.

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LXX.

And had she in the Idæan glen unveiled
In ancient days before the Phrygian swain,
By how much heavenly Venus had prevailed
I know not, though her rivals strove in vain.
Nor haply had the youth for Sparta sailed,
To violate the hospitable reign;
But said; "With Menelaûs let Helen rest!
"No other prize I seek, of this possest;"

LXXI.

Or in Crotona dwelt, where the divine
Zeuxis in days of old his work projected,
To be the ornament of Juno's shrine,
And hence so many naked dames collected;
And in one form perfection to combine,
Some separate charm from this or that selected,
He from no other model need have wrought,
Since joined in her were all the charms he sought.

LXXII.

I do not think Bireno ever viewed
Naked that beauteous form; for sure it were
He never could have been so stern of mood,
As to have left her on that desert lair.
That Ireland's king was fired I well conclude,
Nor hid the flame that he within him bare.
He strives to comfort her, and hope instill,
That future good shall end her present ill:

LXXIII.

And her to Holland promises to bear,
And vows till she is to her state restored,
And just and memorable vengeance there
Achieved upon her perjured, traitor lord,
He never will unceasing war forbear,
Waged with all means that Ireland can afford;
And this with all his speed. He, up and down,
Meantime bids seek for female vest and gown.

LXXIV.

Nor will it need to send in search of vest
Beyond the savage island's narrow bound,
Since thither every day in such came dressed,
Some dame, to feed the beast, from countries round.
Nor long his followers there pursued the quest,
Ere many they of various fashion found.
So was Olympia clothed; while sad of mood
Was he, not so to clothe her as he wou'd.

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LXXV.

But never silk so choice or gold so fine
Did the industrious Florentine prepare,
Nor whosoever broiders gay design,
Though on his task be spent time, toil, and care,
Nor Lemnos' god, nor Pallas' art divine,
Form raiment worthy of those limbs so fair,
That King Oberto cannot choose but he
Recalls them at each turn to memory.

LXXVI.

To see that love so kindled by the dame,
On many grounds Orlando was content;
Who not alone rejoiced that such a shame
Put upon her, Bireno should repent;
But, that in the design on which he came,
He should be freed from grave impediment.
Not for Olympia thither had he made,
But, were his lady there, to lend her aid.

LXXVII.

To him, that there she was not, soon was clear,
But clear it was not if she had been there,
Or no; since of those islesmen, far and near,
One was not left the tidings to declare.
The following day they from the haven steer,
And all united in one squadron fare.
The Paladin with them to Ireland hies,
From whence to France the warrior's passage lies.

LXXVIII.

Scarcely a day in Ireland's realm he spends:
And for no prayers his purposed end forbore:
Love, that in quest of his liege-lady sends
The knight upon this track, permits no more.
Departing, he Olympia recommends
To the Irish monarch, who to serve her swore:
Although this needed not; since he was bent
More than behoved, her wishes to content:

LXXIX.

So levied in few days his warlike band,
And (league with England's king and Scotland's made)
In Holland and in Friesland left no land
To the false duke, so rapid was the raid.
And to rebel against that lord's command
His Zealand stirred; nor he the war delayed,
Until by him Bireno's blood was spilt:
A punishment that ill atoned his guilt.

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LXXX.

Oberto takes to wife Olympia fair,
And her of countess makes a puissant queen.[10]
But be the Paladin again our care,
Who furrows, night and day, the billows green,
And strikes his sails in the same harbour, where
They to the wind erewhile unfurled had been.
All armed, he on his Brigliadoro leaps,
And leaves behind him winds and briny deeps.

LXXXI.

The remnant of the winter, he with shield
And spear achieved things worthy to be shown,
I ween; but these were then so well concealed,
It is no fault of mine they are not blown;
For good Orlando was in fighting field,
Prompter to do, than make his prowess known.
Nor e'er was bruited action of the knight,
Save when some faithful witness was in sight.

LXXXII.

That winter's remnant he so passed, that feat
Of his was known not to the public ear;
But when within that animal discreet
Which Phryxus[11] bore, the sun illumed the sphere,
And Zephyrus returning glad and sweet,
Brought back with him again the blooming year,
The wondrous deeds Orlando did in stower,
Appeared with the new grass and dainty flower.

LXXXIII.

From plain to hill, from champaign-flat to shore,
Oppressed with grief and pain the country fares,
When a long cry, entering a forest hoar,
—A loud lamenting smites upon his ears.
He grasps his brand and spurs his courser sore,
And swiftly pricks towards the sound he hears.
But I shall at another season say
What chanced, and may be heard in future lay.

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CANTO XII.

ARGUMENT.

Orlando, full of rage, pursues a knight
Who bears by force his lady-love away,
And comes where old Atlantes, by his sleight
Had raised a dome, Rogero there to stay.
Here too Rogero comes; where getting sight
Of his lost love, the County strives in fray
With fierce Ferrâu, and, after slaughter fell
Amid the paynim host, finds Isabel.

I.

Ceres, when from the Idæan dame in haste
Returning to the lonely valley, where
Enceladus the Ætnæan mountain placed
On his bolt-smitten flanks, is doomed to bear,
Her girl she found not, on that pathless waste,
By her late quitted, having rent her hair,
And marked cheeks, eyes, and breast, with livid signs,
At the end of her lament tore up two pines,

II.

And lit at Vulcan's fire the double brand,
And gave them virtue never to be spent;
And, afterwards, with one in either hand,
Drawn by two dragons, in her chariot went,
Searching the forest, hill, and level land,
Field, valley, running stream, or water pent,
The land and sea; and having searched the shell
Of earth above, descended into hell.

III.

Had Roland of Eleusis' deity
The sovereign power possessed no less than will,
He for Angelica had land and sea
Ransacked, and wood and field, and pool and rill,
Heaven, and Oblivion's bottom: but since he
Had not, his pressing purpose to fulfil,
Her dragons and her car, the unwearied knight
Pursued the missing maid as best he might.

IV.

Through France he sought her, and will seek her through
The realms of Italy and of Almàyn,
And thence through the Castiles, both old and new,
So passing into Libya out of Spain.
While bold Orlando has this plan in view,
He hears, or thinks he hears, a voice complain:
He forward spurs, and sees on mighty steed
A warrior trot before him on the mead;

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V.

Who in his arms a captive damsel bears,
Sore grieving, and across the pommel laid;
She weeps and struggles, and the semblance wears
Of cruel woe, and ever calls for aid
Upon Anglantes' prince; and now appears
To him, as he surveys the youthful maid,
She, for whom, night and day, with ceaseless pain,
Inside and out, he France had searched in vain.

VI.

I say not is, but that she to the sight
Seems the Angelica he loves so dear.
He who his lady-love and goddess' flight
Beholds, borne off in such afflicted cheer,
Impelled by fury foul, and angry spite,
Calls back with horrid voice the cavalier;
Calls back the cavalier, and threats in vain,
And Brigliadoro drives with flowing rein.

VII.

That felon stops not, nor to him replies,
On his great gain intent, his glorious prey;
And with such swiftness through the greenwood hies,
Wind would not overtake him on his way.
The one pursues while him the other flies,
And with lament resounds the thicket gray.
They issue in a spacious mead, on which
Appears a lofty mansion, rare and rich.

VIII.

Of various marbles, wrought with subtle care,
Is the proud palace. He who fast in hold
Bears off upon his arm the damsel fair,
Sore pricking, enters at a gate of gold.
Nor Brigliador is far behind the pair,
Backed by Orlando, angry knight and bold.
Entering, around Orlando turns his eyes,
Yet neither cavalier nor damsel spies.

IX.

He suddenly dismounts, and thundering fares
Through the inmost palace, seeking still his foe,
And here and there in restless rage repairs,
Till he has seen each bower, each galleried row;
With the same purpose he ascends the stairs,
Having first vainly searched each room below.
Nor spends less labour, on his task intent,
Above, than he beneath had vainly spent.

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X.

Here beds are seen adorned with silk and gold;
Nor of partition aught is spied or wall:
For these, and floor beneath, throughout that hold,
Are hid by curtains and by carpets all.[1]
Now here, now there, returns Orlando bold,
Nor yet can glad his eyes, in bower or hall,
With the appearance of the royal maid,
Or the foul thief by whom she was conveyed.

XI.

This while, as here and there in fruitless pain
He moves, oppressed with thought and trouble sore,
Gradasso, Brandimant, and him of Spain,
Ferrâu, he finds, with Sacripant and more;
Who ever toiling, like himself, in vain
Above, that building, and beneath explore,
And as they wander, curse with one accord
The malice of the castle's viewless lord.

XII.

All in pursuit of the offender speed,
And upon him some charge of robbery lay:
One knight complains that he has stolen his steed,
One that he has purloined his lady gay.
Other accuses him of other deed:
And thus within the enchanted cage they stay,
Nor can depart; while in the palace pent,
Many have weeks and months together spent.

XIII.

Roland, when he round that strange dome had paced
Four times or six, still vainly seeking, said
Within himself, at last, "I here might waste
"My time and trouble, still in vain delayed,
"While haply her the robber whom I chased
"Has far away, through other gate conveyed."
So thinking, from the house he issued out
Into the mead which girt the dome about.

XIV.

While Roland wanders round the sylvan Hall,
Still holding close his visage to the ground,
To see if recent print or trace withal
Can, right or left, upon the turf be found,
He from a neighbouring window hears a call,
And looks, and thinks he hears that voice's sound,
And thinks he sees the visage by which he
Was so estranged from what he wont to be.

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XV.

He thinks he hears Angelica, and she
"Help, help!" entreating cries, and weeping sore,
"More than for life and soul, alas! of thee
"Protection for my honour I implore.
"Then shall it in my Roland's presence be
"Ravished by this foul robber? Oh! before
"Me to such miserable fate you leave,
"Let me from your own hand my death receive!"

XVI.

These words repeated once, and yet again,
Made Roland through each chamber, far and near,
Return with passion, and with utmost pain;
But tempered with high hope. Sometimes the peer
Stopt in his search, and heard a voice complain,
Which seemed to be Angelica's: if here
The restless warrior stand, it sounds from there,
And calls for help he knows not whence nor where.

XVII.

Returning to Rogero, left, I said,
When through a gloomy path, upon his steed,
Following the giant and the dame who fled,
He from the wood had issued on the mead;
I say that he arrived where Roland dread
Arrived before him, if I rightly read.
The giant through the golden portal passed,
Rogero close behind, who followed fast.

XVIII.

As soon as he his foot has lifted o'er
The threshold, he through court and gallery spies
Nor sees the giant or the lady more,
And vainly glances here and there his eyes.
He up and down returns with labour sore,
Yet not for that his longing satisfies;
Nor can imagine where the felon thief
Has hid himself and dame in space so brief.

XIX.

After four times or five he so had wound
Above, below, through bower and gallery fair,
He yet returned, and, having nothing found,
Searched even to the space beneath the stair.
At length, in hope they in the woodlands round
Might be, he sallied; but the voice, which there
Roland recalled, did him no less recall,
And made as well return within the Hall.

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XX.

One voice, one shape, which to Anglantes' peer
Seemed his Angelica, beseeching aid,
Seemed to Rogero Dordogne's lady dear,
Who him a truant to himself had made:
If with Gradasso, or with other near
He spake, of those who through the palace strayed,
To all of them the vision, seen apart,
Seemed that which each had singly most at heart.

XXI.

This was a new and an unwonted spell,
Which the renowned Atlantes had composed,
That in this toil, this pleasing pain, might dwell
So long Rogero, by these walls enclosed,
From him should pass away the influence fell,
—Influence which him to early death exposed.
Though vain his magic tower of steel, and vain
Alcina's art, Atlantes plots again.

XXII.

Not only he, but others who stood high
For valour, and in France had greatest fame,
That by their hands Rogero might not die,
Brought here by old Atlantes' magic came:
While these in the enchanted mansion lie,
That food be wanting not to knight or dame,
He has supplied the dome throughout so well,
That all the inmates there in plenty dwell.

XXIII.

But to Angelica return we, who,
Now of that ring so wondrous repossessed,
(Which, in her mouth, concealed the maid from view,
Preserved from spell when it the finger pressed,)
Was in the mountain-cavern guided to
Whatever needed, viands, mare, and vest,
And had conceived the project to pursue
Her way to her fair Indian realm anew.

XXIV.

King Sacripant, or Roland, willingly
The damsel would have taken for her guide;
Not that, propitious to their wishes, she
(Averse from both) inclined to either side;
But, since her eastern journey was to be
Through town and city, scattered far and wide,
She needed company, and ill had found
More trusty guides than these for such a round.

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XXV.

Now this, now that she sought with fruitless care,
Before she lit on either warrior's trace,
By city or by farm, now here, now there,
In forest now, and now in other place.
Fortune, at length, where caged with Roland are
Ferrâu and Sacripant, directs her chase;
Rogero, with Gradasso fierce, and more,
Noosed with strange witcheries by Atlantes hoar.

XXVI.

She enters, hidden from the enchanter's eyes,
And by the ring concealed, examines all;
And Roland there, and Sacripant espies,
Intent to seek her vainly through that Hall;
And with her image cheating both, descries
Atlantes old. The damsel doubts withal
Which of the two to take, and long revolves
This in her doubtful thought, nor well resolves.

XXVII.

She knows not which with her will best accord,
The Count Orlando or Circassia's knight.
As of most prowess, her would Roland ward
In passage perilous, with better might.
But should she make the peer her guide, her lord,
She knew not if her champion she could slight,
If him she would depress with altered cheer,
Or into France send back the cavalier:

XXVIII.

But Sacripant at pleasure could depose,
Though him she had uplifted to the sky.
Hence him alone she for her escort chose,
And feigned to trust in his fidelity.
The ring she from her mouth withdraws, and shows
Her face, unveiled to the Circassian's eye:
She thought to him alone; but fierce Ferrâu
And Roland came upon the maid, and saw.

XXIX.

Ferrâu and Roland came upon the maid;
For one and the other champion equally
Within the palace and without it strayed
In quest of her, who was their deity.
And now, no longer by the enchantment stayed,
Each ran alike towards the dame, for she
Had placed the ring upon her hand anew,
Which old Atlantes' every scheme o'erthrew.

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XXX.

Helm on the head and corselet on the breast
Of both the knights, of whom I sing, was tied;
By night or day, since they into this rest
Had entered, never doffed and laid aside:
For such to wear were easy as a vest,
To these, so wont the burden to abide.
As well was armed, except with iron masque,
Ferrâu, who wore not, nor would wear, a casque,

XXXI.

Till he had that erst wrested by the peer,
Orlando, from the brother of Troyane;
For so had sworn the Spanish cavalier,
What time he Argaliâ's helm in vain
Sought in the brook; yet though the count was near,
Had not stretched forth his hand the prize to gain.
For so it was, that neither of the pair
Could recognise the other knight while there.

XXXII.

Upon the enchanted dome lay such a spell,
That they from one another were concealed;
They doffed not, night nor day, the corselet's shell,
Nor sword, nor even put aside the shield.
Saddled, with bridle hanging at the sell,
Their steeds were feeding, ready for the field,
Within a chamber, near the palace door,
With straw and barley heaped in plenteous store.

XXXIII.

Nor might nor mean in old Atlantes lies
To stop the knights from mounting, who repair
To their good steeds, to chase the bright black eyes,
The fair vermillion cheeks and golden hair
Of the sweet damsel, who before them flies,
And goads to better speed her panting mare;
Ill pleased the three assembled to discern,
Though haply she had taken each in turn.

XXXIV.

And when these from the magic palace she
Had ticed so far, that she no more supposed
The warriors to the wicked fallacy
Of the malign enchanter were exposed,
The ring, which more than once from misery
Had rescued her, she 'twixt her lips enclosed,
Hence from their sight she vanished in a thought,
And left them wondering there, like men distraught.

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XXXV.

Although she first the scheme had entertained
Roland or Sacripant to have released,
To guide her thither, where her father reigned,
King Galaphron, who ruled i' the farthest East,
The aid of both she suddenly disdained,
And in an instant from her project ceased;
And deemed, without more debt to count or king,
In place of either knight sufficed the ring.

XXXVI.

In haste, they through the forest, here and there,
So scorned of her, still gaze with stupid face;
Like questing hound which loses sight of hare
Or fox, of whom he late pursued the trace,
Into close thicket, ditch, or narrow lair,
Escaping from the keen pursuer's chase.
Meantime their ways the wanton Indian queen
Observes, and at their wonder laughs unseen.

XXXVII.

In the mid wood, where they the maid did lose,
Was but a single pathway, left or right;
Which they believed the damsel could not choose
But follow, when she vanished from their sight.
Ferrâu halts not, and Roland fast pursues,
Nor Sacripant less plies the rowels bright.
Angelica, this while, restrains her steed,
And follows the three warriors with less speed.

XXXVIII.

When pricking thus they came to where the way
Was in the forest lost, with wood o'ergrown,
And had begun the herbage to survey
For print of recent footsteps, up and down,
The Fierce Ferrâu, who might have borne away
From all that ever proudest were, the crown,
With evil countenance, to the other two
Turned him about, and shouted "Whence are you?

XXXIX.

"Turn back or take another road, save here,
"In troth, you covet to be slain by me.
"Nor when I chase or woo my lady dear,
"Let any think I bear with company."
And—"What more could he say, sir cavalier,"
(Orlando cried to Sacripant) "if we
"Were known for the two basest whores that pull
"And reel from spindle-staff the matted wool?"

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XL.

Then turning to Ferrâu, "But that thine head,
"Thou brutish sot, as I behold, is bare,
"If thy late words were ill or wisely said,
"Thou shouldst perceive, before we further fare."
To him Ferrâu; "For that which breeds no dread
"In me, why shouldst thou take such soverign care?
"What I have said unhelmed will I prove true,
"Here, single as I am, on both of you.

XLI.

"Oh! (to Circassia's king cried Roland dread)
"Thy morion for this man let me entreat,
"Till I have driven such folly from his head;
"For never with like madness did I meet."
—"Who then would be most fool?" the monarch said;
"But if indeed you deem the suit discreet,
"Lend him thine own; nor shall I be less fit
"Haply than thee to school his lack of wit."

XLII.

—"Fools, both of you!" (the fierce Ferrâu replied)
"As if, did I to wear a helm delight,
"You would not be without your casques of pride,
"Already reft by me in your despite;
"But know thus much, that I by vow am tied
"To wear no helm, and thus my promise quite;[2]
"Roaming without, till that fine casque I win
"Worn by Orlando, Charles's paladin."

XLIII.

—"Then (smiling, to the Spaniard said the count)
"With naked head, thou thinkest to repeat
"On Roland what he did in Aspramont,
"By Agolant's bold son: but shouldst thou meet
"The warrior whom thou seekest, front to front,
"I warrant thou wouldst quake from head to feet;
"Nor only wouldst forego the casque, but give
"The knight thine other arms to let thee live."

XLIV.

—"So oft have I had Roland on the hip,
"And oft," (exclaimed the boaster,) "heretofore;
"From him it had been easy task to strip
"What other arms, beside his helm, he wore;
"And if I still have let the occasion slip,
"—We sometimes think of things unwished before:
"Such wish I had not; I have now; and hope
"To compass easily my present scope."

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XLV.

The good Orlando could no more forbear,
And cried, "Foul miscreant, liar, matched with me,
"Say, caitiff, in what country, when and where
"Boast you to have obtained such victory?
"That paladin am I, o'er whom you dare
"To vaunt, and whom you distant deemed: now see
"If you can take my helm, or I have might
"To take your other arms in your despite.

XLVI.

"Nor I o'er you the smallest vantage would."
He ended, and his temples disarrayed,
And to a beech hung up the helmet good,
And nigh as quickly bared his trenchant blade.
Ferràu stands close, and in such attitude,
(His courage not for what had chanced dismayed)
Covered with lifted shield and naked sword,
As might best shelter to his head afford.

XLVII.

'Twas thus those warriors two, with faulchions bare,
Turning their ready steeds, began to wheel;
And where the armour thinnest was, and where
The meeting plates were joined, probed steel with steel;
Nor was there in the world another pair
More fitted to be matched in fierce appeal:
Equal their daring, equal was their might,
And safe alike from wound was either knight.

XLVIII.

By you, fair sir, already, I presume,
That fierce Ferrâu was charmed is understood,
Save where the child, enclosed within the womb
Of the full mother, takes its early food;
And hence he ever, till the squalid tomb
Covered his manly face, wore harness good
(Such was his wont) the doubtful part to guard,
Of seven good plates of metal, tempered hard.

XLIX.

Alike a charmed life Orlando bore,
Safe every where, except a single part:
Unfenced beneath his feet, which evermore
By him were guarded with all care and art.
The rest than diamond dug from mountain hoar
More hard, unless report from truth depart;
And armed to battle either champion went,
Less for necessity than ornament.

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L.

Waxing more fierce and fell the combat rages,
Of fear and horror full, between the twain:
The fierce Ferrâu such dreadful battle wages,
That stroke or thrust is never dealt in vain:
Each mighty blow from Roland disengages
And loosens, breaks, or shatters, plate and chain.
Angelica alone, secure from view,
Regards such fearful sight, and marks the two.

LI.

For, during this, the king of Circassy,
Who deemed Angelica not far before,
When Ferrâu and Orlando desperately
Closing in fight were seen, his horse did gore
Along the way by which he deemed that she
Had disappeared; and so that battle sore
Was witnessed 'twixt the struggling foes, by none,
Beside the daughter of king Galaphron.

LII.

After the damsel had sometime descried
This dread and direful combat, standing nigh;
And it appearing that on either side
With equal peril both the warriors vie,
She, fond of novelty, the helm untied
Designs to take; desirous to espy
What they would do when they perceived the wrong;
But, without thought to keep her plunder long.

LIII.

To give it to Orlando was she bent,
But first she would upon the warrior play:
The helmet she took down with this intent
And in her bosom hid, and marked the fray:
Next thence, without a word to either went,
And from the scene of strife was far away
Ere either of the two had marked the feat;
So were they blinded by their angry heat.

LIV.

But Ferrâu, who first chanced the loss to see,
From Roland disengaged himself, and cried,
"How like unwary men and fools are we
"Treated by him, who late with us did ride!
"What meed, which worthiest of the strife might be,
"If this be stolen, the victor shall abide?"
Roland draws back, looks upward, and with ire,
Missing the noble casque, is all on fire:

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LV.

And in opinion with Ferràu agreed,
That he the knight, who was with them before,
Had borne away the prize; hence turned his steed,
And with the spur admonished Brigliador.
Ferràu, who from the field beheld him speed,
Followed him, and when Roland and the Moor
Arrived where tracks upon the herbage green
Of the Circassian and the maid were seen,

LVI.

Towards a vale upon the left the count
Went off, pursuing the Circassian's tread;
The Spaniard kept the path more nigh the mount,
By which the fair Angelica had fled.
Angelica, this while, has reached a fount,
Of pleasant site, and shaded overhead;
By whose inviting shades no traveller hasted,
Nor ever left the chrystal wave untasted.

LVII.

Angelica, the sylvan spring beside,
Reposes, unsuspicious of surprise;
And thinking her the sacred ring will hide,
Fears not that evil accident can rise.
On her arrival at the fountain's side,
She to a branch above the helmet ties;
Then seeks the fittest sapling for her need,
Where, fastened to its trunk, her mare may feed.

LVIII.

The Spanish cavalier the stream beside
Arrived, who had pursued her traces there:
Angelica no sooner him espied,
Than she evanished clean, and spurred her mare[3];
The helm this while had dropt, but lay too wide
To be recovered of the flying fair.
As soon as sweet Angelica he saw,
Towards her full of rapture sprang Ferràu.

LIX.

She disappeared, I say, as forms avaunt
At sleep's departure: toiling long and sore
He seeks the damsel there, 'twixt plant and plant,
Nor can his wretched eyes behold her more.
Blaspheming his Mahound and Termagant,[4]
And cursing every master of his lore,
Ferràu returned towards the sylvan fount,
Where lay on earth the helmet of the count.

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LX.

This he soon recognised, for here he read
Letters upon the margin, written fair,
Which how Orlando won the helmet said;
And from what champion took, and when and where.
With it the paynim armed his neck and head,
Who would not for his grief the prize forbear;
His grief for loss of her, conveyed from sight,
As disappear the phantoms of the night.

LXI.

When in this goodly casque he was arrayed,
He deemed nought wanting to his full content,
But the discovery of the royal maid,
Who like a flash of lightning came and went:
For her he searches every greenwood shade,
And when all hope of finding her is spent,
He for the vain pursuit no longer tarries,
But to the Spanish camp returns near Paris;

LXII.

Tempering the grief which glowed within his breast,
For such sore disappointment, with the thought
That he was with Orlando's morion blest,
As sworn. By good Anglante's count, when taught
That the false Saracen the prize possest,
Long time the Spanish knight was vainly sought;
Nor Roland took the helmet from his head,
Till he between two bridges laid him dead.

LXIII.

Angelica thus, viewless and alone,
Speeds on her journey, but with troubled front;
Grieved for the helmet, in her haste foregone
On her departure from the grassy fount.
"Choosing to do what I should least have done,"
(She said) "I took his helmet from the count.
"This for his first desert I well bestow;
"A worthy recompense for all I owe!

LXIV.

"With good intentions, as God knows, I wrought;
"Though these an ill and different end produce;
"I took the helmet only with the thought
"To bring that deadly battle to a truce
"And not that this foul Spaniard what he sought
"Should gain, or I to his intent conduce."
So she, lamenting, took herself to task
For having robbed Orlando of his casque.

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LXV.

By what appeared to her the meetest way,
Moody and ill-content she eastward pressed;
Ofttimes concealed, sometimes in face of day,
As seemed most opportune and pleased her best.
After much country seen, a forest gray
She reached, where, sorely wounded in mid breast,
Between two dead companions on the ground,
The royal maid a bleeding stripling found.

LXVI.

But of Angelica I now no more
Shall speak, who first have many things to say;
Nor shall to the Circassian or the Moor
Give for long space a rhyme; thence called away
By good Anglante's prince, who wills, before
I of those others tell, I should display
The labours and the troubles he sustained,
Pursuing the great good he never gained.

LXVII.

At the first city, whither he was brought
(Because to go concealed he had good care),
He a new helmet donned; but took no thought
What was the head-piece he designed to bear.
So safe is he in fairy spell, it nought
Imports, if hard or soft its temper were.
Orlando, covered thus, pursues the quest,
Nor him day, night, or rain, or sun arrest.

LXVIII.

It was the hour that out of Ocean's bed
Dan Phœbus drew his dripping steeds, and high
And low, still scattering yellow flowers and red,
Aurora stained the heavens with various dye,
And Stars had cast their veils about their head,
Departing from their revels in the sky;
When passing on a day fair Paris near,
Orlando made his mighty worth appear.

LXIX.

Two squadrons he encountered; one an old
Saracen, Manilardo clept, obeyed;
King of Noritia, whilom fierce and bold,
But fitter now to counsel than to aid.
The next beneath the standard was enrolled
Of Tremisena's monarch, who was said
'Mid Africans to be a perfect knight;
Alzirdo he by those who knew him, hight:

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LXX.

These, with the other Saracen array,
Cantoned throughout the winter months had lain,
Some near the city, some more far away,
All lodged nigh town or hamlet on the plain.
For since King Agramant had many a day
Spent in attacking Paris' walls in vain,
He (for no other means remained to try)
Would lastly with a siege the city ply;

LXXI.

And to do this had people infinite:
Since he, beside the host that with him came,
And that of Spain which followed to the fight
The Spanish King Marsilius' oriflame,
Many of France did in his pay unite:
For all from Paris he to Arles's stream,
With part of Gascony, some straggling tower
Excepted, had reduced beneath his power.

LXXII.

The quivering brook, as warmer breezes blew,
Beginning now from ice its waves to free,
And the fresh-springing grass and foliage new,
To clothe again the field and greenwood tree,
All those King Agramant assembled, who
Had followed him in his prosperity;
To muster in review the armed swarm,
And give to his affairs a better form:

LXXIII.

Hence did the King of Tremisen' repair,
With him who had Noritia in command,
To be in time at that full muster, where
Each squadron, good or bad, was to be scanned:
Orlando thus by chance encountered there,
As I have told you, this united band;
Who, as his usage was, went seeking her,
By whom he had been made Love's prisoner..

LXXIV.

Alzirdo, as the approaching count he eyes,
Who in this world for valour has no peer,
With such a haughty front, and in such guise,
The God of war would less in arms appear,
The features known before astounded spies,
The fierce, disdainful glance and furious cheer;
And him esteems a knight of prowess high,
Which, fondly, he too sore desires to try.

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LXXV.

Arrogant, young, and of redoubted force,
Alzirdo was, and prized for dauntless mind;
Who bent to joust pricked forth his foaming horse,
Happier had he remained in line behind!
Met by Anglante's prince in middle course,
Who pierced his heart as they encountering joined.
Frighted, the lightened courser scoured the plain,
Without a rider to direct the rein.

LXXVI.

Rises a sudden and a horrid cry,
And air on every side repeats the scream;
As his scared band the falling youth descry,
And issuing from his wound so wide a stream:
Disordered, they the count in fury ply,
And, raised to cut or thrust, their weapons gleam.
Against that flower of knights, their feathered reeds,
A thicker squadron yet in tempest speeds.

LXXVII.

With sound like that, with which from hill repair,
Or from the champaign's flat the hurrying swine,
(If the Wolf issue from his grot, or Bear,
Descending to the mountains' lower line,
Some bristly youngling take away and tear,
Who with loud squeal and grunt is heard to pine)
Came driving at the count the barbarous rout;
"Upon him!" and "upon him!" still their shout.

LXXVIII.

At once spears, shafts, and swords, his corslet bore
By thousands, and as many pierce his shield.
This threatens on one side, and that before,
And those the ponderous mace behind him wield.
But he esteems the craven rout no more,
He, who did never yet to terror yield,
Than hungry Wolf in twilight makes account
To what the number of the flock may mount.

LXXIX.

He held unsheathed that thundering sword in hand,
Which with so many foes has heaped the plain,
That he who thinks to count the slaughtered band,
Has undertaken hard emprize and vain.
The road ran red, ensanguined by his brand,
And scarce capacious of the many slain.
For neither targe nor head-piece good defends,
Where fatal Durindana's blade descends.

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LXXX.

Nor safety cotton vest, nor cloths supply,
In thousand folds about the temples spread:
Nor only groan and lamentation fly
Through air, but shoulder, arm, and severed head.
Death roams the field in strange variety
Of horrid forms, and all inspiring dread;
And says, "For hundreds of my scythes may stand
"His Durindana in Orlando's hand."

LXXXI.

His ceaseless strokes scarce one the other wait:
Speedily all his foemen are in flight.
And when before they came at furious rate,
They hoped to swallow quick the single knight.
None is there who, in that unhappy straight,
Stops for his comrade, flying from the fight.
Here one man speeds afoot, one gallops there;
None stays to question if the road be fair.

LXXXII.

His mirror Valour bore about, and here
Each blemish of the soul was seen confest:[5]
None looked therein, except an aged peer,
Whose blood was chilled, but courage unreprest.
That death were better deems this cavalier
Than life in flight, and in disgrace possest:
I mean Noritia's king, who lays his lance
In rest against the paladin of France;

LXXXIII.

He broke it on the border of the shield
Of the intrepid count, with stedfast hand,
Who, by the stroke unshaken, nothing reeled;
And smote the king, in passing, with his brand.
Him Fortune saved; for as Orlando wheeled
The blade, it turned, descending, in his hand.
Although an-edge he guides not still the sword,
Stunned from his saddle reels the paynim lord.

LXXXIV.

Astounded from his saddle reels the king,
Nor him Orlando turns about to see.
He cuts, and cleaves, and slays his following;
Who all believe him at their backs to be
As through the spacious air, with troubled wing,
The starlings from the daring merlin flee;
So, of that broken squadron, scattered round,
Some fly, some dip, and some fall flat to ground.

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LXXXV.

He ceased not his ensanguined blade to sway
Till living wight remained not in his view.
Orlando doubted to resume his way,
Although the country all about he knew.
Does he the right or left-hand road assay,
His thoughts still rove from what his steps pursue,
And he to seek the damsel is in dread
Through other path than that by which she fled.

LXXXVI.

Through wood and field his courser did he goad,
Often inquiring for the royal dame:
Beside himself, he strayed beside his road,
And to the foot of rising mountain came,
Whence (it was night-time) through a fissure glowed
The distant flicker of a quivering flame.
Orlando to the rock approached, to spy
If there Angelica concealed might lie.

LXXXVII.

As where low junipers o'ershade her lair,
Or in the stubble of the open lay,
What time the hunters seek the fearful hare
Through traversed woods, and through uncertain way,
—Lest peradventure she be hidden there,
They every bramble, every bush assay;
Even so, where hope the toiling warrior leads,
Searching his lady-love, Orlando speeds.

LXXXVIII.

Pricking in haste towards that ray, the count
Arrived where in the wood the light was shed,
Forth-steaming from a crevice in the mount,
Within whose womb a spacious grotto spread;
And there, like wall or bank, discerned in front,
Of thorns and underwood a bristly bed,
To hide the grotto's inmates, and defend
From scathe or scorn, which others might intend.

LXXXIX.

By day it had been hidden evermore;
But the clear flame betrayed the haunt by night.
Its use he guessed; but would the place explore,
And better certify himself by sight.
When he without had tied his Brigliador,
In silence to the grotto stole the knight;
Threading the shrubs; nor calling for a guide,
Entered the passage in the mountain's side.

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XC.

By a long flight of steps was the descent
Into the cave; where, in the rocky tomb,
Buried were living folk. Of wide extent,
The grot was chiselled into vaulted room;
Nor was, although its entrance little lent,
All daylight wanting to disperse the gloom:
For much was furnished by a window dight,
Within a natural fissure on the right.

XCI.

In the mid cave, beside a fire was seen
A gentle maid of pleasing look and guise;
Who seemed to Roland little past fifteen,
As far as at first sight he might surmise.
With that so fair she made the rugged scene
Seem in the warrior's sight a paradise.
Although this while her eyes with tears o'erflow,
Clear tokens of a heart oppressed with woe.

XCII.

An aged dame was with her, and the pair
Wrangled, as oftentimes is women's way;
But when the County was descended there.
Concluded the dispute and wordy fray.
Orlando hastens to salute them fair
(As still is due to womankind), and they
To welcome him rise lightly from their seat,
And with benign return the warrior greet.

XCIII.

'Tis true, that when that sudden voice they hear,
Somedeal confused in look they seem to be,
At the same time beholding thus appear
So fierce a man, and harnessed cap-a-pee.
"What wight" (demands Anglantes' cavalier)
"So barbarous is, and void of courtesy,
"That he keeps buried, in this rude repair,
"A face so gentle and so passing fair?"

XCIV.

With pain the virgin to the count replies,
As he inquires of her unhappy doom,
In sweet and broken accents, which by sighs
Impelled, through rows of pearl and coral come:
And between rose and lily, from her eyes
Tears fall so fast, she needs must swallow some.
In other canto, sir, be pleased to attend
The rest, for here 'tis time my strain should end.

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CANTO XIII.

ARGUMENT.

The Count Orlando of the damsel bland
Who loves Zerbino, hears the piteous woes.
Next puts to death the felons with his hand
Who pent her there. Duke Aymon's daughter goes,
Seeking Rogero, where so large a band
The old Atlantes' magic walls enclose.
Her he impounds, deceived by fictions new.
Agramant ranks his army for review.

I.

Those ancient cavaliers right happy were,
Born in an age, when, in the gloomy wood,
In valley, and in cave, wherein the bear,
Serpent, or lion, hid their savage brood,
They could find that, which now in palace rare
Is hardly found by judges proved and good;
Women, to wit, who in their freshest days
Of beauty worthily deserve the praise

II.

Above I told you how a gentle maid
Orlando had discovered under ground,
And asked, 'by whom she thither was conveyed?'
Pursuing now my tale, I tell, how drowned
In grief (her speech by many a sob delayed),
The damsel fair, in sweet and softest sound,
Summing them with what brevity she might,
Her ills recounted to Anglantes' knight.

III.

"Though I am sure," she said, "O cavalier,
"To suffer punishment for what I say;
"Because I know, to him who pens me here,
"This woman quickly will the fact display;
"I would not but thou shouldst the story hear.
"—And let my wretched life the forfeit pay!
"For what can wait me better than that he,
"My gaoler, should one day my death decree?

IV.

"Lo! I am Isabel, who once was styled
"The daughter of Gallicia's hapless king:
"I said aright who *was*; but now the child
"(No longer *his*) of care and suffering:
"The fault of Love, by whom I was beguiled;
"For against him alone this charge I bring,
"Who sweetly, at the first, our wish applauds,
"And weaves in secret but deceit and frauds.

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V.

" Whilom I lived, content in Fortune's smile,
" Rich, blameless, fair, and young; to sad reverse
" Condemned, I now am wretched, poor, and vile,
" And in worse case, if any yet be worse.
" But it is fitting, I to thee this while
" From their first root my troubles should rehearse.
" And it will soothe me, though of thee I borrow
" No help, that thou compassionate my sorrow.

VI.

" My father in his city of Bayonne,
" (To-day will be twelve months) a tourney dight;[1]
" Hence, led by spreading rumour to our town,
" To joust, from different lands came many a knight;
" Mid these (was it his manifest renown,
" Or was it love which so deceived my sight)
" Praise in my eyes alone Zerbino won,
" Who was the mighty king of Scotland's son.

VII.

" When him I after in the field espied,
" Performing wondrous feats of chivalry,
" I was surprised by Love, ere I descried
" That freedom was for ever lost to me.
" Yet, following in my Love, so rash a guide,
" I lay this unction to my phantasy,
" That no unseemly place my heart possest,
" Fixed on the worthiest in the world and best.

VIII.

" In beauty and in valour's boast above
" Those other lords the Scottish prince stood high.
" He showed me, and, I think, he bore me love,
" And felt no less an ardent flame than I.
" Nor lacked there one who did between us move,
" To speak our common wishes frequently,
" So could we still in heart and mind unite,
" Although disjoined from one another's sight.

IX.

" Hence, when concluded was the festal show,
" And to his home Zerbino was returned,
" If thou know'st what is love, thou well may'st know
" How night and day I for the warrior yearned;
" And was assured, no less on him did prey
" The flame, that in his constant bosom burned.
" He, save a way to have me with him, nought
" For solace of his restless passion sought.

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X.

"For different faith forbade him (on my side
"I was a Saracen, a Christian he)
"To ask me of my father as a bride,
"By stealth he purposed to elope with me.
"Amid green fields, our wealthy town beside,
"I had a garden, seated by the sea,
"Upon the pleasant shore; from whence the eye
"Might ocean and the hills about descry.

XI.

"A fitting place to effect what different creed
"And law forbade us, he esteemed this site,
"And showed the order taken for the deed,
"Which was to make our future life's delight;
"And how, near Santa Martha, for our need,
"A bark was with arm'd men in ambush dight,
"Under Sir Odoric of Biscay's command;
"A leader he, approved by sea and land!

XII.

"Unable in his person this to do,
"For by his father he was forced to wend
"In succour of the king of France, in lieu
"This Odoric for the purpose he would send;
"Chosen, of all his faithful friends and true,
"As his most faithful and his truest friend:
"And such had been, if benefits could bind
"And goodly deeds the friendship of mankind.

XIII.

"At the time fixed to bear me thence away,
"This chief would anchor on the destined ground.
"—And thus it was arrived the wished-for day,
"When I of them was in my garden found.
"Sir Odoric, at night, with fair array
"Of valiant men, by land and sea renowned,
"In the near river from his bark descends,
"And thence in silence to my garden wends.

XIV.

"To the pitched bark with me his party sped,
"Before the city knew what was at hand;
"Some of the house, disarmed and naked, fled,
"And some were slain; while of the helpless band,
"With me, another part was captive led.
"So was I severed from my native land,
"Hoping in brief Zerbino to possess,
"I cannot tell thee with what happiness.

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XV.

" Scarcely was Mongia by our galley doubled,[2]
" Ere a squall took us on the larboard side,
" Which round about the clear horizon troubled,
" And stirred and tost heaven-high the foaming tide.
" Smote with a north-west wind, next, ocean bubbled,
" Which on her other beam the vessel plied:
" This evermore increases, with such force,
" Starboard or larboard, boots not which our course.

XVI.

" It steads not to strike sail, nor lash the mast,
" Lowered on the gang-board, nor our castles fell;[3]
" The bark, in our despite, is hurried fast
" Towards the pointed rocks about Rochelle:
" Save HE, above, assist us at the last,
" The cruel storm will us ashore impel;
" Driven thither by ill wind with mightier speed
" Than ever bow-string gave to whistling reed.

XVII.

" Our peril well does the Biscayan note,
" And tries what often has an evil end;
" Lowers down the galley's skiff, and, when afloat,
" Descends into it, and makes me descend:
" Two follow, and a troop would throng the boat,
" Did not the first prevent them, and defend
" The entrance with their naked faulchions; we
" Sever the rope forthwith, and put to sea.[4]

XVIII.

" Driven landward, on the shore we safely light
" Who in the skiff embarked; while of our band
" The rest in the split vessel sink outright;
" Our goods sea-swallowed all. Upon the strand
" To ETERNAL LOVE, to GOODNESS INFINITE,
" I offer up my thanks, with outstretched hand,
" That I was doomed not 'mid the watery roar
" To perish, nor behold Zerbino more.

XIX.

" Though I had left on shipboard matters rare,
" And precious in their nature, gem and vest,
" So I might hope Zerbino's lot to share,
" I was content the sea should have the rest.
" No dwelling on the beach appears, nor there
" Is any pathway seen, by footsteps pressed;
" Only a hill, whose woody top is beat
" By ceaseless winds, the waters bathe its feet.

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XX.

"Here the fell tyrant Love, aye prompt to range,
"And faithless to his every promise still,
"Who watches ever how he may derange
"And mar our every reasonable will,
"Converts, with woeful and disastrous change,
"My comfort to despair, my good to ill:
"For he, in whom Zerbino put his trust,
"Cooled in his loyal faith, and burned with lust.

XXI.

"Whether he this desire had nursed at sea,
"And had not dared exhibit it before;
"Or that it sprung from opportunity,
"Suggested by that solitary shore;
"Without more pause, in that lone desert, he
"Would sate his greedy passion; but forbore
"Till he of one could rid him, of the twain,
"Who in the boat with us had scaped the main.

XXII.

"A man of Scotland he, Almonio hight,
"Who to Zerbino seemed great faith to bear;
"And as a perfect warrior by the knight,
"Praised, when to Odoric given, his trust to share:
"To him (the Spaniard said) it were a slight
"If I unto Rochelle afoot should fare;
"And prayed, that he before would thither speed,
"And forward thence some hackney, for my need.

XXIII.

"Almonio, who in this suspects no ill,
"Forthwith, before our party, wends his way
"To the town, hidden by the wooded hill,
"And which not more than six miles distant lay.
"To the other finally his wicked will
"Sir Odoric took courage to display;
"As well because he could not rid him thence,
"As that in him he had great confidence.

XXIV.

"He that remained with us, of whom I said
"Before, Corebo was of Bilbao hight,
"Who with him under the same roof was bred
"From infancy, and the ungrateful wight
"Deemed that the thought he harboured in his head
"He could impart in safety to the knight,
"Who would prefer, neglectful of his trust,
"The pleasure of his friend to what was just.

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XXV.

"Not without high disdain Corebo heard
"(Who kind and courteous was) the Biscayneer,
"And termed him traitor; and by deed and word
"Withstood the purpose of his foul compeer.
"This mighty wrath in either warrior stirred;
"In sign whereof their naked brands they rear.
"At sight of their drawn swords, in panic, I
"Turn shortly through the gloomy wood to fly.

XXVI.

"Sir Odoric in war well taught and bred,
"Gained in few blows such vantage in the fray,
"He left Corebo on the field for dead,
"And, following in my steps, pursued my way.
"Love lent to him (unless I am misled)
"Pinions, that he might overtake his prey;
"And many a prayer and glozing flattery taught,
"Wherewith I to compliance might be wrought.

XXVII.

"But all in vain, for I was fixed and bent,
"Rather than sate his ill desire, to die.
"When menace had by him been vainly spent,
"And every prayer and every flattery,
"He would by open force his will content;
"Nor boots it aught that I entreaties try;—
"Of his lord's faith in him the wretch remind,
"And how myself I to his hands resigned.

XXVIII.

"When I perceived that ruthless was my prayer,
"And that I could not hope for other aid;
"For he assailed me like a famished bear,
"With hands and feet I fierce resistance made,
"As he more brutal waxed, and plucked his hair,
"And with my teeth and nails his visage flayed:
"This while I vent such lamentable cries,
"The clamour echoes to the starry skies.

XXIX.

"Were they by chance conducted, or my shriek,
"Which might have well been heard a league around,
"(Or, was it they were wont the shore to seek,
"When any vessel split or ran aground)
"I saw a crowd appear upon the peak,
"Which, to the sea descending, towards us wound.
"Them the Biscayan saw, and at the sight
"Abandoned his design, and turned to flight.

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XXX.

"This rabble, sir, against that treacherous man
"Comes to my aid; but in such guise, that I
"The homely saw, of falling from the pan
"Into the fire beneath, but verify.
"'Tis true so lost I was not, nor that clan
"Accursed with minds of such iniquity,
"That they to violate my person sought;
"Though nothing good or virtuous on them wrought:

XXXI.

"But that they knew, for me preserved a maid,
"As yet I am, they higher price might crave.
"Eight months are past, the ninth arrived, since, stayed
"By them, alive I languish in this grave.
"All hope is lost of my Zerbino's aid:
"For from their speech I gather, as a slave,
"I am bartered to a merchant for his gold;
"By whom I to the sultan shall be sold."

XXXII.

The gentle damsel so her tale pursues
While sobs and sighs oft interposing break
Her soft angelic voice, which might infuse
Compassion into asp, or venomed snake.
What time she so her piteous grief renews
Or haply does her bitter anguish slake,
Some twenty men the gloomy cavern fill;
This armed with hunting-spear, and that with bill.

XXXIII.

With squinting look and dark, and but one eye,
The leader of the troop, of brutish cheer
Was he, the foremost of the company;
By a blow blinded, which from nose to ear
Had cleft his jaw: when he did so descry
Seated beside the maid, that cavalier,
He turned about and said; "Lo! in the net
Another bird for whom it was not set!"

XXXIV.

Then to the county cried; "I never knew
"A man more opportune my wants to stead;
"I know not whether any one to you
"Perchance may have announced my pressing need
"Of such fair arms,—or you conjectured true,—
"As well as of that goodly sable weed.
"You verily arrived in season are
"My needs (pursued the losel) to repair."

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XXXV.

With bitter smile, upstarting on his feet,
Orlando to the ruffian made reply:
"Thou at a price at which no chapmen treat,
"Unmarked in merchant's books, these arms shalt buy:"
With that he snatched a brand, which, full of heat
And smoke, was smouldering in the chimney nigh,
Threw it, and smote by chance the knave half blind,
Where with the nose the meeting brows confined.

XXXVI.

The brand discharged by him, hit either brow,
But most severely on the left did smite;
For that ill feature perished by the blow
Which was the thief's sole minister of light.
Nor is the stroke content to blind the foe;
Unsated, save it register his sprite
Among those damned souls, whom Charon keeps,[5]
With their companions, plunged in boiling deeps.

XXXVII.

A spacious table in mid cavern stood,
Two palms in thickness, in its figure square;
Propt on one huge, ill-fashioned foot and rude,
Which held the thief and all who harboured there.
Even with such freedom as his dart of wood
We mark the nimble Spaniard launch through air,
The heavy table Roland seized and threw,
Where, crowded close together, stood the crew.

XXXVIII.

One had his belly crushed, and one his breast;
Another head or arm, or leg and thigh.
Whence some were slain outright, and maimed the rest,
While he who was least injured sought to fly.
'Tis so sometimes, with heavy stone oppressed,
A knot of slimy snakes is seen to lie,
With battered head and loins, where, winter done,
They lick their scales, rejoicing in the sun.

XXXIX.

I could not say what mischiefs these offend;
One dies, and one departs without its tail;
Another crippled cannot move an end,
And wriggling wreathes its length without avail:
While this, whom more propitious saints befriend,
Safe through the grass drags off its slimy trail.
Dire was the stroke; yet should no wonder breed,
Since good Orlando's arm achieved the deed.

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XL.

Those whom the board had little maimed or nought,
(Turpin[8] says there were seven) in craven wise,
Their safety in their feet, yet vainly, sought;
For to the cavern's door Orlando hies.
And having them without resistance caught
Fast with a rope their hands behind them ties;
A rope, which in the cavern on the ground,
Convenient for his purpose he had found.

XLI.

He after drags them bound without the cave,
Where an old service-tree its shadow throws.
Orlando lops the branches with his glaive,
And hangs the thieves, a banquet for the crows.
Nor chain and crook for such a deed did crave:
For ready hooks the tree itself bestows,
To purge the world; where by the chin up-hung,
These, on the branches, bold Orlando strung.

XLII.

The ancient woman, the assassin's friend,
Escapes when she perceives that all are dead,
And, threading that green labyrinth without end,
Laments, and plucks the hair from off her head,
By fear impelled, through paths which sore offend
Her feet, till she, beside a river's bed,
Encounters with a warrior: but to say
Who was the stranger champion I delay;

XLIII.

And turn to her, who to the count applied,
Praying he would not leave her there alone,
And vowed to follow whither he would guide.
Orlando her consoles in courteous tone;
And thence, when, with a wreath of roses tied
About her brows, and robed in purple gown,
On wonted journey white Aurora starts,
The paladin with Isabel departs.

XLIV.

Without encountering aught that might appear
Worthy of note, they wended many a day;
And finally the twain a cavalier,
As prisoner led, encountered by the way.
Who shall be told; but tale to you as dear
Now calls me from the beaten path away;
—Of Aymon's daughter,—whom I left above,
Languid and lost in all the pains of love.

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XLV.

The beauteous lady who desires in vain,
Rogero should not his return delay,
Lies in Marseilles, from whence the paynim train
She harasses, nigh each returning day;
(What time they robbing aye, by hill and plain,
Scour fruitful Languedoc and Provence gay)
And the true duty executes aright
Of a sage leader and a valiant knight.

XLVI.

The time long past, she, lying in that place,
Had hoped that her Rogero would appear,
She, not beholding him in all that space,
Of many evil chances lived in fear.
One day, mid others that her woeful case
The lady wept alone, to her drew near
The dame, who with that healing ring made sound
The bosom rankling with Alcina's wound.

XLVII.

When her she saw, without her love returned,
(Such time elapsed, her mission incomplete),
Sore trembling, faint, and pale, her heart so yearned,
She scarce had strength to stand upon her feet.
But the enchantress kind, when she discerned
Her fear, advanced with smiles the maid to meet;
And to console her such glad visage wore
As messenger who joyful tidings bore.

XLVIII.

"Fear not for thy Rogero; he is well
"And safe (she cried), and ever worships thee,
"As wonted; but thy foe, that wizard fell,
"Him yet again deprives of liberty.
"And it behoves thee now to climb the sell,
"Would'st thou possess him, and to follow me;
"For if thou wendest with me, I will lead
"Whither, by thee Rogero shall be freed."

XLIX.

And next pursued, relating to her all
The frauds and magic of Atlantes hoar,
'That wearing her fair face, who seemed the thrall
'Of an ill giant, him had through the door
'Of gold, enticed into the enchanted hall,
'And after disappeared, the youth before;
'And told how dames and cavaliers he cheats
'Who thither make resort, with like deceits.

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L.

"Seeing the sage, all think they see a squire,
"Companion, lady-love, or absent friend;
"Whatever is each several wight's desire:
"Since to one scope our wishes never tend.
"Hence searching every where, themselves they tire
"With labour sore, and frustrate of their end;
"And cannot, (so Desire and Hope deceive),
"Without the missing good, that palace leave.

LI.

"As soon as thou (pursued the dame) art near
"The place where he has built the magic seat,
"Resembling thy Rogero in his cheer
"And every look, Atlantes thee shall meet,
"And make himself by his ill art appear
"As suffering from some stronger arm defeat;
"That thou may'st aid him in the peril feigned,
"And thus among those others be detained.

LII.

"To the end thou may'st escape his ambush, where
"So many and so many, thus betrayed,
"Have fallen; though he Rogero seem, beware
"To lend him faith, who will demand thine aid:
"Nor, when the sage presents himself, forbear
"To take his worthless life with lifted blade.
"Nor think to slay Rogero with the blow,
"But him who works thee still such cruel woe.

LIII.

"Hard will it seem to slay, full well I know,
"The wight, in whom Rogero you descry;
"But, for truth is not in the lying show,
"Trust not to sight where magic blears the eye.
"Fix, ere with me you to the forest go,
"To change not when the traitorous foe is nigh:
"For never shall with you Rogero wive,
"If weakly you the wizard leave alive."

LIV.

The valorous maid with the intent to slay
The false enchanter, on her plan decides,
Snatches her arms, and follows on her way
Melissa sage, in whom she so confides.
And thus, by fruitful field or forest gray,
Her by forced journeys that enchantress guides;
And studies to beguile their weary course
Ever, as best she may, with sweet discourse:

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LV.

And as the fairest topic of all those
Which might be grateful to the damsel's ear,
Her future offspring and Rogero's chose
(A race of demigods) in prince and peer.
For as Melissa all the secrets knows
Of the eternal gods who rule our sphere,
The good enchantress can discover all
Which should in many ages hence befall.

LVI.

"Oh! my best guide," exclaimed the damsel bold
To the weird-woman that to aid her came,
"As thou hast many years before foretold
"Men who shall glorify my race and name,
"So now I pray thee, lady, to unfold
"The praise and virtues of some noble dame,
"If from my lineage any such shall rise."
To whom Melissa courteously replies:

LVII.

"Chaste dames of thee descended I survey,
"Mothers of those who wear imperial crown,
"And mighty kings; the column and the stay
"Of glorious realms and houses of renown.
"And as thy sons will shine in arms, so they
"Will no less fame deserve in female gown,
"With piety and sovereign prudence graced,
"And noble hearts, incomparably chaste.

LVIII.

"And if at length I should relate to thee
"The praise of all who from thy root ascend,
"Too long my tale would hold, nor do I see
"Whom I could pass, where all to fame pretend.
"But from a thousand I some two or three
"Will choose, because my tale may have an end.
"Why was not in the cave thy wish made known,
"Where I their shadows might as well have shown?

LIX.

"To hear of one of thy famed race prepare,
"Whom liberal studies and good works engage;
"Of whom, I know not well, if she more fair
"May be entitled, or more chaste and sage;
"The noble-minded Isabel,[7] who, where
"It stands on Mincio's bank, in other age
"Shall gild the town, of Ocnus' mother hight,
"With her own glorious rays by day and night;

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LX.

"Where, with her worthiest consort she will strain,
"In honoured and in splendid rivalry,
"Which best shall prize the virtues' goodly train,
"And widest ope the gates to courtesy.
"If he by Taro, and in Naples' reign,[8]
"('Tis said), from Gauls delivered Italy,
"'Twill be replied, Penelope the chaste,
"As such, was not beneath Ulysses placed.

LXI.

"Great things and many thus I sum in few
"Of this brave dame, and others leave behind;
"Which when I from the vulgar herd withdrew,
"Sage Merlin from the hollow stone divined.
"For I should leave old Typhis[9] out of view,
"If on such sea I launched before the wind:
"And with this finish my prophetic strain,
"—All blessings on her head the skies will rain.

LXII.

"With her shall be her sister Beatrice,[10]
"Whose fortunes well shall with her name accord;
"Who, while she lives, not only shall not miss
"What good the heavens to those below afford,
"But make, with her, partaker of her bliss,
"First among wealthy dukes, her cherished lord;
"Who shall, when she from hence receives her call,
"Into the lowest depth of misery fall.

LXIII.

"Viscontis' serpents will be held in dread,[11]
"And Moro and Sforza, while this dame shall be,
"From Hyperborean snows to billows red;
"From Ind to hills, which to a double sea
"Afford a passage;[12] and, the lady dead,
"To the sore mischief of all Italy,
"Will with the Insubri into slavery fall;
"And men shall sovereign wisdom fortune call.

LXIV.

"Others the same illustrious name will bear,[13]
"And who will flourish many years before.
"Pannonia's garland one of these shall wear.
"Another matron on the Ausonian shore,
"When she shall be released from earthly care,
"Men will among the blessed saints adore;
"With incense will approach the dame divine,
"And hang with votive images her shrine.

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LXV.

"The others I shall pass in silence by,
"For 'twere too much (as said before) to sound
"Their fame; though each might well deserve, that high
"Heroic trump should in her praise be wound.
"Hence the Biancas and Lucretias I
"And Constances and more reserve; who found,
"Or else repair, upon Italian land,
"Illustrious houses with supporting hand.

LXVI.

"Thy race, which shall all else in this excel,
"In the rare fortune of its women thrives;
"Nor of its daughters' honour more I tell
"Than of the lofty virtue of its wives:
"And that thou may'st take note of this as well,
"Which Merlin said of thy descendants' lives,
"(Haply that I the story might narrate)
"This I no little covet to relate.

LXVII.

"Of good Richarda first shall be my strain,[14]
"Mirror of chastity and fortitude,
"Who, young, remains a widow, in disdain
"Of fortune: (that which oft awaits the good)
"Exiles, and cheated of their father's reign,
"She shall behold the children of her blood
"Wandering into the clutches of their foe;
"Yet find at last a quittance for her woe.

LXVIII.

"Nor sprung from the ancient root of Aragon,
"I of the gorgeous queen will silent be;
"Than whom more prudent or more chaste is none,
"Renowned in Greek or Latin history;
"Nor who so fortunate a course will run,
"After that, by divine election, she
"Shall with the goodly race of princes swell,
"Alphonso, Hyppolite, and Isabel.

LXIX.

"The prudent Eleanour is this; a spray[15]
"Which will be grafted on thy happy tree.
"What of the fruitful stepchild shall I say,
"Who in succession next to her I see,
"Lucretia Borgia?[16] who, from day to day,
"Shall wax in beauty, virtue, chastity,
"And fortune, that like youthful plant will shoot,
"Which into yielding soil has struck its root.

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LXX.

"As tin by silver, brass by gold, as Corn-
"Poppy beside the deeply-crimsoning rose,
"Willow by laurel evergreen, as shorn
"Of light, stained glass by gem that richly glows,
"—So by this dame I honour yet unborn,
"Each hitherto distinguished matron shows;
"For beauty and for prudence claiming place,
"And all praise-worthy excellence and grace.

LXXI.

"And above every other noble praise,
"Which shall distinguish her alive or dead,
"Is that by her shall be, through kingly ways,
"Her Hercules and other children led;
"Who thus the seeds of worth in early days,
"To bloom in council and in camp, will shed.
"For long wine's savour lingers in the wood
"Of the new vessel, whether bad or good.

LXXII.

"Nor the step-daughter of this noble dame,
"Will I, Renata,[17] hight of France, forget,
"Of Louis born, twelfth monarch of his name,
"And Bretagne's pride; all virtues ever yet
"Bestowed on woman, since the ruddy flame
"Has warmed, or water had the power to wet,
"Or overhead the circling heavens have rolled,
"United in Renata I behold.

LXXIII.

"'Twere long to tell of Alda de Sansogna,[18]
"Or of Celano's countess in this string,
"Or Blanche Maria, styled of Catalonia;
"Or her, the daughter of Sicilia's king,
"Or of the beauteous Lippa de Bologna,
"Or more, with whose renown the world shall ring,
"To speak whose separate praise with fitting lore,
"Were to attempt a sea without a shore."

LXXIV.

When of the larger portion of her seed
The kind enchantress at full ease had told,
And oft and oft rehearsed, amid the rede,
What arts Rogero to the wizard's hold
Had drawn, Melissa halted near the mead
Where stood the mansion of Atlantes old,
Nor would approach the magic dome more nigh,
Lest her the false magician should espy.

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LXXV.

And yet again advised the martial maid,
(Counsel she had a thousand times bestowed)
Then left. Nor Bradamant through greenwood shade
More than two miles in narrow path had rode,
Before, by two fierce giants overlaid,
She saw a knight, who like Rogero showed,
So closely pressed, and labouring sore for breath,
That he appeared well nigh reduced to death.

LXXVI.

When she beheld him in such perilous strait,
Who of Rogero all the tokens wore,
She quickly lost the faith she nourished late,
Quickly her every fair design forbore.
She weens Melissa bears Rogero hate,
For some new injury unheard before;
And with unheard-of hate and wrong, her foe
Would by her hand destroy who loves him so.

LXXVII.

She cried, "And is not this Rogero, who
"Aye present to my heart, is now to sight?
"If 'tis not him whom I agnize and view,
"Whom e'er shall I agnize or view aright?
"Why should I other's judgment deem more true
"Than the belief that's warranted by sight?
"Even without eyes, and by my heart alone,
"If he were near or distant, would be shown."

LXXVIII.

While so the damsel thinks, a voice she hears,
Which, like Rogero's, seems for aid to cry;
At the same time, the worsted knight appears
To slack the bridle and the rowels ply:
While at full speed the goaded courser clears
His ground, pursued by either enemy.
Nor paused the dame, in following them who sought
His life, till to the enchanted palace brought.

LXXIX.

Of which no sooner has she past the door,
Than she is cheated by the common show.
Each crooked way or straight her feet explore
Within it and without, above, below;
Nor rests she night or day, so strong the lore
Of the enchanter, who has ordered so,
She (though they still encounter and confer)
Knows not Rogero, nor Rogero her.

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LXXX.

But leave we Bradamant, nor grieve, O ye
Who hear, that she is prisoned by the spell,
Since her in fitting time I shall set free,
And good Rogero, from the dome as well.
As taste is quickened by variety,
So it appears that, in the things I tell,
The wider here and there my story ranges,
It will be found less tedious for its changes.

LXXXI.

Meseems that I have many threads to clear
In the great web I labour evermore;
And therefore be ye not displeased to hear
How, all dislodged, the squadrons of the Moor,
Threatening the golden lilies loud, appear
In arms, the royal Agramant before:
Who bids for a review his army post,
Willing to know the numbers of his host.

LXXXII.

For besides horse and foot, in the campaign
Sore thinned, whose numbers were to be supplied,
Had many captains, and those good, of Spain,
Of Libya, and of Æthiopia, died;
And thus the nations, and the various train,
Wandered without a ruler or a guide.
To give to each its head and order due,
The ample camp is mustered in review.

LXXXIII.

To fill the squadrons ravaged by the sword,
In those fierce battles and those conflicts dread,
This to his Spain, to his Africa *that* lord,
Sent to recruit, where well their files they fed;
And next distributed the paynim horde
Under their proper captains, ranged and led.
I, with your leave, till other strain, delay
The order of the muster to display.

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CANTO XIV.

ARGUMENT.

Two squadrons lack of those which muster under
King Agramant, by single Roland slain;
Hence furious Mandricardo, full of wonder
And envy, seeks the count by hill and plain:
Next joys himself with Doralice; such plunder,
Aided by heaven, his valiant arms obtain.
Rinaldo comes, with the angel-guide before,
To Paris, now assaulted by the Moor.

I.

In many a fierce assault and conflict dread,
'Twixt Spain and Afric and their Gallic foe,
Countless had been the slain, whose bodies fed
The ravening eagle, wolf, and greedy crow;
But though the Franks had worse in warfare sped,
Forced all the champaigne country to forego,
This had the paynims purchased at the cost
Of more good princes and bold barons lost.

II.

So bloody was the price of victory,
Small ground was left them triumphs to prepare;
And if, unconquered Duke Alphonso,[1] we
May modern things with ancient deeds compare,
The battle, whose illustrious palm may be
Well worthily assigned to you to wear,
At whose remembrance sad Ravenna trembles,
And aye shall weep her loss, this field resembles.

III.

When the Calesians and the Picards yielding,
And troops of Normandy and Aquitaine,
You, with your valiant arm their squadrons shielding,
Stormed the almost victorious flags of Spain;
And those bold youths their trenchant weapons wielding,
Through parted squadrons, followed in your train;
Who on that day deserved you should accord,
For honoured gifts, the gilded spur and sword.[2]

IV.

You, with such glorious hearts, who were not slow
To follow, nor far off, the gorgeous oak
Seized, and shook down the golden acorns so,
And so the red and yellow truncheon broke,
That we to you our festal laurels owe,
And the fair lily, rescued from its stroke;
Another wreath may round your temples bloom,
In that Fabricius you preserved to Rome.[3]

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V.

Rome's mighty column, by your valiant hand
Taken and kept entire,[4] more praise has shed
On you, than if the predatory band
Had routed by your single valour bled,
Of all who flocked to fat Ravenna's land,
Or masterless, without a banner fled,
Of Arragon, Castile, or of Navarre;
When vain was lance or cannon's thundering car.

VI.

This dear-bought victory brought more relief
Than joy, by its event too much outweighed,
The loss of that French captain and our chief,[5]
Whom dead we on the fatal field surveyed;
And swallowed in one storm, for further grief,
So many glorious princes, who, arrayed
For safeguard of their own, or neighbouring lands,
Had poured through frozen Alps their friendly bands.

VII.

Our present safety, and life held in fear,
We see assured us by this victory,
That saved us from the wintry tempest drear,
Which would have whelmed us from Jove's angry sky.[6]
But ill can we rejoice, while yet the tear
Is standing in full many a widow's eye,
Who weeping and attired in sable, vents,
Throughout all grieving France, her loud laments.

VIII.

'Tis meet King Lewis should find new supplies
Of chiefs by whom his troops may be arrayed,
Who for the lilies' honour shall chastise
The hands which so rapaciously have preyed;
Who brethren, black and white, in shameful wise,
Have outraged, sister, mother, wife, and maid,
And cast on earth Christ's sacrament divine,
With the intent to thieve his silver shrine.

IX.

Hadst thou not made resistance to thy foe,
Better, Ravenna, had it been for thee,
And thou been warned by Brescia's fate, than so
Thine should Faenza warn and Rimini.
O Lewis, bid good old Trivulzio go
With thine, and to thy bands example be,
And tell what ills such license still has bred,
Heaping our ample Italy with dead.[7]

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X.

As the illustrious King of France has need
Of captains to supply his leaders lost,
So the two kings who Spain and Afric lead,
To give new order to the double host,
Resolve their bands should muster on the mead,
From winter lodgings moved and various post;
That they may furnish, as their wants demand,
A guide and government to every band.

XI.

Marsilius first, and after Agramant,[8]
Passing it troop by troop their army scan.
The Catalonians, who their captain vaunt
In Doriphœbus, muster in the van;
And next, without their monarch Fulvirant,
Erst killed by good Rinaldo, comes the clan
Of bold Navarre; whose guideless band to steer
The King of Spain appoints Sir Isolier.

XII.

With Balugantes Leon's race comes on,
The Algarbi governed by Grandonio wheel.
The brother of Marsilius, Falsiron,
Brings up with him the powers of Less Castile.
They follow Madarasso's gonfalon,
Who have left Malaga and fair Seville,
'Twixt fruitful Cordova and Cadiz-bay,
Where through green banks the Betis winds its way.

XIII.

Stordilane, Tessira, and Baricond,
After each other, next their forces stirred;
This in Grenada, that in Lisbon crowned;
Majorca was obedient to the third.
Larbino *had* Lisbon ruled, whose golden round
Was at his death on Tessira conferred;
His kinsman he: Gallicia came in guide
Of Serpentine, who Mericold supplied.

XIV.

They of Toledo and of Calatrave,
Who erst with Sinnagon's broad banner spread,
Marched, and the multitude who drink and lave
Their limbs in chrystal Guadiana's bed,
Came thither, under Matalista brave;
Beneath Bianzardin, their common head,
Astorga, Salamanca, and Placenza,
With Avila, Zamorra, and Palenza.

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XV.

The household-troops which guard Marsilius' state,
And Saragossa's men, Ferrâu commands;
And in this force, well-sheathed in mail and plate,
Bold Malgarine and Balinverno stands;
Morgant and Malzarise, whom common fate
Had both condemned to dwell in foreign lands;
Who, when dethroned, had to Marsilius' court
(There hospitably harboured) made resort.

XVI.

Follicon, King Marsilius' bastard, hies
With valiant Doricont; amid this horde,
Bavartes, Analard, and Argalise,
And Archidantes, the Saguntine lord.
Here, Malagur, in ready cunning wise,
And Ammirant and Langhiran the sword
Unsheath, and march; of whom I shall endite,
When it is time, their prowess to recite.

XVII.

When so had filed the warlike host of Spain
In fair review before King Agramant,
Appeared King Oran with his martial train,
Who might almost a giant's stature vaunt;
Next they who weep their Martasino, slain
By the avenging sword of Bradamant,
King of the Garamantes, and lament
That woman triumphs in their monarch spent.

XVIII.

Marmonda's men next past the royal Moor,
Who left Argosto dead on Gascon meads;
And this unguided band, like that before,
As well as the fourth troop, a captain needs
Although King Agramant has little store
Of chiefs, he feigns a choice, and thinks; next speeds
Buraldo, Ormida, and Arganio tried,
Where needing, the unordered troops to guide.

XIX.

He gives Arganio charge of Libicane,
Who wept the sable Dudrinasso dead.
Brunello guides the men of Tingitane,
With cloudy countenance and drooping head;
Who since he in the wooded mountain-chain
(Nigh where Atlantes dwelt), to her he led,
Fair Bradamant, had lost the virtuous ring,
Had lived in the displeasure of his king;

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XX.

And but that Ferrâu's brother Isolier,
Who fastened to a stem had found him there,
Made to King Agramant the truth appear,
He from the gallows-tree had swung in air:
Already fastened was the noose, and near
The caitiff's fate, when at the many's prayer
The king bade loose him; but reprieving, swore,
For his first fault to hang, offending more.

XXI.

Thus, not without a cause, Brunello pined,
And showed a mournful face, and hung his head.
Next Farurantes: to whose care consigned,
Maurina's valiant horse and footmen tread.
The new-made king Libanio comes behind,
By whom are Constantina's people led:
Since Agramant the crown and staff of gold,
Once Pinador's, had given to him to hold.

XXII.

Hesperia's people come with Soridan,
With Dorilon the men of Setta ride;
The Nasamonians troop with Pulian,
And Agricaltes is Ammonia's guide.
Malabupherso rules o'er Fezzan's clan,
And Finaduro leads the band supplied
By the Canary Islands and Morocco:
Balastro fills the place of king Tardocco

XXIII.

Next Mulga and Arzilla's legions two.
The first beneath their ancient captains wend;
The second troop without a leader, who
Are given to Corineus, the sovereign's friend.
So (late Tanphirion's) Almonsilla's crew,
To a new monarch in Caïchus bend.
Gœtulia is bestowed on Rhimedont,
And Costa comes in charge of Balinfront.

XXIV.

Ruled by Clarindo, Bolga's people go,
Who fills the valiant Mirabaldo's post:
Him Baliverso, whom I'd have you know
For the worst ribald in that ample host,
Succeeded next. I think not, 'mid that show,
The bannered camp a firmer troop could boast
Than that which followed in Sobrino's care;
Nor Saracen than him more wise and ware.

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XXV.

Gualciotto dead, Bellamarina's crew,
(His vassals) serve, the sovereign of Algiers,
King Rodomont, of Sarza; that anew
Brought up a band of foot and cavaliers:
Whom, when the cloudy sun his rays withdrew
Beneath the Centaur and the Goat,[9] his spears
There to recruit, was sent to the Afric shore
By Agramant, returned three days before.

XXVI.

There was no Saracen of bolder strain,
Of all the chiefs who Moorish squadrons led;
And Paris-town (nor is the terror vain)
More of the puissant warrior stands in dread
Than of King Agramant and all the train,
Which he, or the renowned Marsilius head;
And amid all that mighty muster, more
Than others, hatred to our faith he bore.

XXVII.

Prusion is the Alvaracehia's king: below
King Dardinello's flag Zumara's power
Is ranged. I wot not, I, if owl or crow,
Or other bird ill-omened, which from tower
Or tree croaks future evil, did foreshow
To one or to the other, that the hour
Was fixed in heaven, when on the following day
Either should perish in this deadly fray.

XXVIII.

Noritia's men and Tremisene's alone
Were wanting to complete the paynim host;
But in the martial muster sign was none.
Nor tale, nor tiding of the squadrons lost;
To wondering Agramant alike unknown,
What kept the slothful warriors from their post;
When of King Tremisene's a squire was brought
Before him, who at large the mischief taught;

XXIX.

—Who taught how Manilardo was laid low,
Alzirdo, and many others, on the plain.
—"Sir," said the bearer of the news, "the foe
"Who slew our troop, would all thy camp have slain,
"If thine assembled host had been more slow
"Than me, who, as it was, escaped with pain.
"This man slays horse and foot, as in the cote,
"The wolf makes easy waste of sheep and goat."

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XXX.

Where the bold Africans their standards plant,
A warrior had arrived some days before;
Nor was there in the west, or whole Levant,
A knight, with heart or prowess gifted more.
To him much grace was done by Agramant,
As successor of Agrican, who wore
The crown of Tartary, a warrior wight;
The son the famous Mandricardo hight.

XXXI.

Renowned he was for many a glorious quest
Achieved, and through the world his fame was blown.
But him had glorified above the rest
Worth in the Syrian fairy's castle shown :[10]
Where mail, which cased the Trojan Hector's breast
A thousand years before, he made his own.
And finished that adventure, strange and fell;
A story which breeds terror but to tell.

XXXII.

When the squire told his news amid that show
Of troops, was present Agrican's bold son,
Who raised his daring face, resolved to go
And find the warrior who the deed had done;
But the design he hatched, forbore to show;
As making small account of any one,
Or fearing lest, should he reveal his thought,
The quest by other champion might be sought.

XXXIII.

He of the squire demanded what the vest
And bearings, which the valiant stranger wore;
Who answered, 'that he went without a crest,
'And sable shield and sable surcoat bore.'
—And, sir, 'twas true; for so was Roland drest;
The old device renounced he had before:
For as he mourned within, so he without,
The symbols of his grief would bear about.

XXXIV.

Marsilius had to Mandricardo sped,
As gift, a courser of a chesnut stain,
Whose legs and mane were sable; he was bred
Between a Friesland mare and nag of Spain.
King Mandricardo, armed from foot to head,
Leapt on the steed and galloped o'er the plain,
And swore upon the camp to turn his back
Till he should find the champion clad in black.

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XXXV.

The king encounters many of the crew
Whom good Orlando's arm had put to flight;
And some a son, and some a brother rue,
Who in the rout had perished in their sight;
And in the coward's cheek of pallid hue
Is *yet* pourtrayed the sad and craven sprite:
—*Yet*, through the fear endured, they far and nigh,
Pallid, and silent, and insensate fly.

XXXVI.

Nor he long way had rode, ere he descried
A passing-cruel spectacle and sore;
But which the wonderous feats well testified,
That were recounted Agramant before.
Now on *this* hand, now *that*, the dead he eyed,
Measured their wounds, and turned their bodies o'er;
Moved by strange envy of the knight whose hand
Had strown the champaign with the slaughtered band.

XXXVII.

As wolf or mastiff-dog, who comes the last
Where the remains of slaughtered bullock lie,
And finds but horn and bones, where rich repast
Had fed the ravening hound and vulture nigh,
Glares vainly on the skull, unsmacked; so passed
The barbarous Tartar king those bodies by;
And grudged, lamenting, like the hungry beast,
To have come too late for such a sumptuous feast.

XXXVIII.

That day, and half the next, in search he strayed
Of him who wore the sable vest and shield.
When lo! he saw a mead, o'ertopt with shade,
Where a deep river wound about the field,
With narrow space between the turns it made
Where'er from side to side the water wheeled.
Even such a spot as this with circling waves
Below Otricoli the Tyber laves.

XXXIX.

Where this deep stream was fordable, he scanned
A crowd of cavaliers that armour bore:
And these the paynim questioned, 'Who had manned,
'With such a troop, and to what end, the shore?'
To him replied the captain of the band,
Moved by his lordly air, and arms he wore,
Glittering with gold and jewels,—costly gear,
Which showed him an illustrious cavalier.

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XL.

"In charge" (he said) "we of the daughter go
"Of him our king, who fills Granada's throne,
"Espoused by Rodomont of Sarza, though
"To fame the tidings are as yet unknown.
"And we, departing when the sun is low,
"And the cicala hushed, which now alone
"Is heard, shall bring her where her father keeps
"I' the Spanish camp; meanwhile the lady sleeps."

XLI.

He who for scorn had daffed the world aside,
Designs to see at once, how able were
Those horsemen to defend the royal bride,
Committed by their sovereign to their care.
"The maid, by what I hear, is fair:" (he cried)
"Fain would I now be certified, how fair:
"Then me to her, or her to me convey,
"For I must quickly wend another way."

XLII.

"Thou needs art raving mad," replied in few
The chief,—nor more. But with his lance in rest,
The Tartar monarch at the speaker flew,
And with the levelled spear transfixed his breast.
For the point pierced the yielding corslet through,
And lifeless he, perforce, the champaign prest.
The son of Agrican his lance regained,
Who weaponless without the spear remained.

XLIII.

Nor sword nor club the warlike Tartar bore,
Since when the Trojan Hector's plate and chain
He gained, because the faulchion lacked, he swore
(To this obliged), nor swore the king in vain,
That save he won the blade Orlando wore,
He would no other grasp,—that Durindane,
Held in high value by Almontes bold,
Which Roland bears, and Hector bore of old.

XLIV.

Great is the Tartar monarch's daring, those
At such a disadvantage to assay.
He pricks, with levelled lance, among his foes,
Shouting, in fury,—"Who shall bar my way?"—
Round and about him suddenly they close;
These draw the faulchion, and those others lay
The spear in rest: a multitude he slew,
Before his lance was broke upon the crew.

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XLV.

When this he saw was broke, the truncheon sound
And yet entire, he took, both hands between,
And with so many bodies strewed the ground,
That direr havoc never yet was seen:
And as with that jaw-bone, by hazard found,
The Hebrew Samson slew the Philistines,
Crushed helm and shield; and often side by side,
Slain by the truncheon, horse and rider died.

XLVI.

In running to their death the wretches vie,
Nor cease because their comrades perish near:
Yet bitterer in such a mode to die,
Than death itself, does to the troop appear.
They grudge to forfeit precious life, and lie
Crushed by the fragment of a broken spear;
And think foul scorn beneath the pounding stake
Strangely to die the death of frog or snake.

XLVII.

But after they at their expense had read
That it was ill to die in any way,
And near two thirds were now already dead,
The rest began to fly in disarray.
As if with what was his the vanquished fled,
The cruel paynim, cheated of his prey,
Ill bore that any, from the murderous strife
Of that sacred rabble, should escape with life.

XLVIII.

As in the well-dried fen or stubble-land,
Short time the stalk endures, or stridulous reed,
Against the flames, which careful rustic's hand
Scatters when Boreas blows the fires to feed;
What time they take, and by the north-wind fanned
Crackle and snap, and through the furrow speed;
No otherwise, with little profit, those
King Mandricardo's kindled wrath oppose.

XLIX.

When afterwards he marks the entrance free,
Left ill-secured, and without sentinel,
He, following prints (which had been recently
Marked on the mead), proceeds, amid the swell
Of loud laments, Granada's dame to see,
If she as beauteous were as what they tell.
He wound his way 'mid corpses, where the wave,
Winding from side to side, a passage gave:

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L.

And in the middle of the mead surveyed
Doralice (such the gentle lady's name),[11]
Who, at the root of an old ash-tree laid,
Bemoaned her: fast her lamentations came,
And tears, like plenteous vein of water, strayed
Into the beauteous bosom of the dame;
Who, (so it from her lovely face appeared,)
For others mourned, while for herself she feared.

LI.

Her fear increased when she approaching spied
Him foul with blood, and marked his felon cheer;
And piercing shrieks the very sky divide
Raised by herself and followers, in their fear.
For over and above the troop who guide
The fair infanta, squire and cavalier,
Came ancient men and matrons in her train,
And maids, the fairest of Granada's reign.

LII.

When that fair face by him of Tartary
Is seen, which has no paragon in Spain,
Where amid tears (in laughter what were she?)
Is twisted Love's inextricable chain,
He knows not if in heaven or earth he be;
Nor from his victory reaps other gain,
Than yielding up himself a thrall to her,
(He knows not why) who was his prisoner.

LIII.

Yet not so far his courtesy he strained,
That he would lose his labour's fruit, although
The royal damsel showed, who sorely plained,
Such grief as woman in despair can show.
He, who the hope within him entertained
To turn to sovereign joy her present woe,
Would wholly bear her off; whom having placed
On a white jennet, he his way retraced.

LIV.

He dames, maids, ancient men, and others, who
Had from Granada with the damsel fared,
Kindly dismissed, their journey to pursue;
Saying, "My care suffices; I of guard,
"Of guide, of handmaid will the office do
"To serve her in her every need prepared.
"Farewell!" and thus unable to withstand
The wrong, with tears and sighs withdrew the band,

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LV.

Saying, "How woe-begone will be her sire,
"When he the miserable case shall hear!
"What grief will be the bridegroom's! what his ire,
"How dread the vengeance of that cavalier!
"When so the lady's needs such help require,
"Alas! and why is not the champion near,
"To save the illustrious blood of Stordilane,
"Ere the thief bears her farther hence, from stain?"

LVI.

The Tartar, joying in the prize possest,
Which he by chance and valour won and wore;
To find the warrior of the sable vest
Seemed not to have the haste he had before,
And stopp'd and loitered, where he whilom prest;
And cast about and studied evermore
To find some fitting shelter; with desire,
In quiet to exhale such amorous fire.

LVII.

Doralice he consoled this while, whose eyes
And cheek were wetted with the frequent tear,
And many matters feigned and flattering lies;
'How, known by fame, he long had held her dear,
'And how his country and glad realm, whose size
'Shamed others, praised for grandeur far and near,
'He quitted, not for sight of France or Spain,
'But to behold that cheek of lovely grain.'

LVIII.

"If a man merits love by loving, I
"Yours by my love deserve; if it is won
"By birth,—who boasts a genealogy
"Like me, the puissant Agricano's son?
"By riches,—who with me in wealth can vie,
"That in dominion yield to God alone?
"By courage,—I to-day (I ween) have proved
"That I for courage merit to be loved."

LIX.

These words, and many others on his part,
Love frames and dictates to the Tartar knight,
Which sweetly tend to cheer the afflicted heart
Of the unhappy maid, disturbed with fright.
By these fear first was laid, and next the smart
Sheathed of that woe, which had nigh pierced her sprite;
And with more patience thence the maid began
To hear, and her new lover's reasons scan.

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LX.

Next much more affable, with courteous lore
Seasoning her answers to his suit, replies;
Nor looking at the king, sometimes forbore
To fix upon his face her pitying eyes.
The paynim thence, whom Love had smote before,
Not hopeful now, but certain, of his prize,
Deemed that the lovely damsel would not still,
As late, be found rebellious to his will.

LXI.

Riding in her glad company a-field,
Which so rejoiced his soul, so satisfied;
And being near the time, when to their bield,
Warned by the chilly night, all creatures hied,
Seeing the sun now low and half concealed,
The warrior 'gan in greater hurry ride;
Until he heard reed-pipe and whistle sound,
And next saw farm and cabin smoking round.

LXII.

Pastoral lodgings were the dwellings near,
Less formed for show, than for conveniency;
And the young damsel and the cavalier
The herdsman welcomed with such courtesy,
That both were pleasured by his kindly cheer.
For not alone dwells Hospitality
In court and city; but ofttimes we find
In loft and cottage men of gentle kind.

LXIII.

What afterwards was done at close of day
Between the damsel and the Tartar lord,
I will not take upon myself to say;
So leave to each, at pleasure, to award.
But as they rose the following morn more gay,
It would appear they were of fair accord:
And on the swain who them such honour showed,
Her thanks at parting Doralice bestowed.

LXIV.

Thence from one place to the other wandering, they
Find themselves by a river, as they go,
Which to the sea in silence winds its way,
And ill could be pronounced to stand or flow.
So clear and limpid, that the cheerful day,
With nought to intercept it, pierced below.
Upon its bank, beneath a cooling shade,
They found two warriors and a damsel laid.

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LXV.

Now lofty Fancy, which one course to run
Permits not, calls me hence in sudden wise;
And thither I return, where paynims stun
Fair France with hostile din and angry cries,
About the tent, wherein Troyano's son
The holy empire in his wrath defies,
And boastful Rodomont, with vengeful doom,
Gives Paris to the flames, and levels Rome.

LXVI.

Tidings had reached the Moorish sovereign's ear
That the English had already passed the sea;
And he bade Garbo's aged king appear,
Marsilius, and his heads of chivalry:
Who all advised the monarch to prepare
For the assault of Paris. 'They may be
Assured they in the storm will never thrive,
Unless 'tis made before the aids arrive.'

LXVII.

Innumerable ladders for the scale
Had been collected upon every hand,
And plank and beam, and hurdle's twisted mail,
For different uses, at the king's command;
And bridge and boat; and, what might more avail
Than all the rest, a first and second band
For the assault (so bids the monarch) form;
Who will himself go forth with them that storm.

LXVIII.

The emperor, on the vigil of the day
Of battle, within Paris, everywhere,
By priest and friar of orders black and gray,
And white, bade celebrate mass-rite and prayer;
And those who had confessed, a fair array,
And from the Stygian demons rescued were,
Communicated in such fashion, all,
As if they were the ensuing day to fall.

LXIX.

At the high church, he, girt with paladine
And preachers of the word, and barons brave,
With much devotion at those acts divine
Assisted, and a fair example gave;
And there with folded hands and face supine,
Exclaimed, "O Lord! although my sins be grave,
"Permit not, that, in this their utmost need,
"Thy people suffer for their king's misdeed!

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LXX.

"And if that they should suffer is thy will,
"And that they should due penance undergo,
"At least delay thy purpose to fulfil!
"So that thine enemies deal not the blow.
"For, when 'tis given him in his wrath to kill
"Us who are deemed thy friends, the paynim foe,
"That thou art without power to save, will cry,
"Because thou lett'st thy faithful people die:

LXXI.

And, for one faithless found, against thy sway
"A hundred shall throughout the world rebel;
"So that false Babel's law will have its way,
"And thus thy blessed faith put down and quell.
"Defend thy suffering people, who are they
"That purged thy tomb from heathen hounds and fell,
"And many times and oft, by foes offended,
"Thy holy church and vicars have defended.

LXXII.

"That our deserts unfitting are to place
"I' the scale against our mighty debt, I know;
"Nor pardon can we hope, if we retrace
"Our sinful lives: but if thou shouldst bestow
"In aid, the gift of thy redeeming grace,
"The account is quit and balanced, that we owe;
"Nor can we of thy succour, Lord, despair,
"While we in mind thy saving mercy bear."

LXXIII.

So spake the holy emperor aloud,
In humbleness of heart and deep contrition;
And added other prayers withal, and vowed
What fitted his great needs and high condition.
Nor was his supplication disallowed;
For his good genius hears the king's petition,
Best of the seraphs he; who spreads his wings,
And to the Saviour's feet this offering brings.

LXXIV.

Infinite other prayers as well preferred,
Were, by like couriers, to the Godhead's ear
So borne; which when the blessed spirits heard,
They all together gazed, with pitying cheer,
On their eternal, loving Lord, and, stirred
With one desire, besought that he would hear
The just petition, to his ears conveyed,
Of this his Christian people, seeking aid.

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LXXV.

And the ineffable Goodness, who in vain
Was never sought by faithful heart, an eye,
Full of compassion, raised; and from the train
Waved Michael, and to the arch-angel; "Hie,
"To seek the Christian host that crost the main,
"And lately furled their sails in Picardy:
"These so conduct to Paris, that their tramp
"And noise be heard not in the hostile camp.

LXXVI.

"Find Silence first, and bid him, on my part,
"On this emprize attend thee, at thy side;
"Since he for such a quest, with happiest art
"Will know what is most fitting to provide.
"Next, where she sojourns, instantly impart
"To Discord my command, that she, supplied
"With steel and tinder, 'mid the paynims go,
"And fire and flame in their encampment blow;

LXXVII.

"And throughout those among them, who are said
"To be the mightiest, spread such strife, that they
"Together may contend, and that some dead
"Remain, some hurt, some taken in the fray;
"And some to leave the camp, by wrath, be led;
"So that they yield their sovereign little stay."
Nothing the blessed winged-one replies,
But swoops descending from the starry skies.

LXXVIII.

Where'er the angel Michael turns his wing,
The clouds are scattered and the sky turns bright
About his person forms a golden ring,
As we see summer-lightning gleam at night.
This while the courier of the heavenly king
Thinks, on his way, where he may best alight,
With the intent to find that foe to speech,
To whom he first his high behest would teach.

LXXIX.

Upon the thought the posting angel brooded,
Where he for whom he sought was used to dwell;
Who after thinking much, at last concluded
Him he should find in church or convent-cell;
Where social speech is in such mode excluded,
That SILENCE, where the cloistered brethren swell
Their anthems, where they sleep, and where they sit
At meat; and everywhere in fine is writ.

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LXXX.

Weening that he shall find him here, he plies
With greater speed his plumes of gilded scale.
And deems as well that Peace, here guested, lies,
And Charity and Quiet, without fail.
But finds he is deceived in his surmise,
As soon as he has past the cloister's pale.
Here Silence is not; nor ('tis said) is found
Longer, except in writing, on this ground.

LXXXI.

Nor here he Love, nor here he Peace surveys,
Piety, Quiet, or Humility.
Here dwelt they once; but 'twas in ancient days;
Chased hence by Avarice, Anger, Gluttony,
Pride, Envy, Sloth, and Cruelty. In amaze
The angel mused upon such novelty:
He narrowly the hideous squadron eyed,
And Discord too amid the rest espied;

LXXXII.

Even her, to whom the eternal Sire as well,
Having found Silence, bade him to repair.
He had believed he to Avernus' cell,
Where she was harboured with the damned, must fare,
And now discerned her in this other hell
(Who would believe it?) amid mass and prayer.
Strange Michael thought to see her there enshrined,
Whom he believed he must go far to find.

LXXXIII.

Her by her party-coloured vest he knew.
Unequal strips and many formed the gown,
Which, opening with her walk, or wind that blew,
Now showed, now hid her; for they were unsown.
Her hair appeared to be at strife; in hue
Like silver and like gold, and black and brown;
Part in a tress, in riband part comprest,
Some on her shoulders flowed, some on her breast.

LXXXIV.

Examination, summons, and a store
Of writs and letters of attorney, she,
And hearings, in her hands and bosom bore,
And consultation, and authority:
Weapons, from which the substance of the poor
Can never safe in walled city be.
Before, behind her, and about her, wait
Attorney, notary, and advocate.

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LXXXV.

Her Michael calls to him, and gives command
"That she among the strongest paynims go;
"And find occasion whence amid the band
"Warfare and memorable scathe may grow."
He next from her of Silence makes demand,
Who of his motions easily might know
As one who from one land to the other hied,
Kindling and scattering fire on either side.

LXXXVI.

"I recollect not ever to have viewed
"Him anywhere," quoth Discord in reply;
"But oft have heard him mentioned, and for shrewd
"Greatly commended by the general cry:
"But Fraud, who makes one of this multitude,
"And who has sometimes kept him company,
"I think, can furnish news of him to thee,
"And (pointing with her finger) *that is she.*"

LXXXVII.

With pleasing mien, grave walk, and decent vest,
Fraud rolled her eye-balls humbly in her head;
And such benign and modest speech possest,
She might a Gabriel seem who *Ave* said.[12]
Foul was she and deformed, in all the rest;
But with a mantle, long and widely spread,
Concealed her hideous parts; and evermore
Beneath the stole a poisoned dagger wore.

LXXXVIII.

Of her the good archangel made demand
What way in search of Silence to pursue:
Who said; "He with the Virtues once was scanned,
"Nor dwelt elsewhere; aye guested by the crew
"Of Benedict, or blest Elias' band.
"When abbeys and when convent-cells were new;
"And whilom in the schools long time did pass,
"With sage Archytas and Pythagoras.

LXXXIX.

"But those philosophers and saints of yore
"Extinguished, who had been his former stay,
"From the good habits he had used before
"He passed to evil ones; began to stray,
"Changing his life, at night with lovers, bore
"Thieves company, and sinned in every way:
"He oftentimes consorts with Treason; further,
"I even have beheld him leagued with Murther

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XC.

"With coiners him you oftentimes may see
"Harbour in some obscure and close repair.
"So oft he changes home and company,
"To light on him would be a fortune rare:
"Yet have I hope to point him out to thee:
"If to Sleep's house thou wilt at midnight fare,
"Him wilt thou surely find; for to repose
"At night he ever to that harbour goes."

XCI.

Though Fraud was alway wont to deal in lies,
So like the simple truth appears her say,
The angel yields the tale belief; and flies
Forth from the monastery without delay,
Tempers his speed, and schemes withal in wise
To finish at the appointed time his way,
That at the house of Sleep (the mansion blind
Full well he knew) this Silence he may find.

XCII.

In blest Arabia lies a pleasant vale,
Removed from village and from city's reach.
By two fair hills o'ershadowed is the dale,
And full of ancient fir and sturdy beech.
Thither the circling sun without avail
Conveys the cheerful daylight: for no breach
The rays can make through boughs spread thickly round;
And it is here a cave runs under ground.

XCIII.

Beneath the shadow of this forest deep,
Into the rock there runs a grotto wide.
Here wildly wandering, ivy-suckers creep,
About the cavern's entrance multiplied.
Harboured within this grot lies heavy Sleep.
Ease, corpulent and gross, upon *this* side,
Upon *that*, Sloth, on earth has made her seat;
Who cannot go, and hardly keeps her feet.

XCIV.

Mindless Oblivion at the gate is found,
Who lets none enter, and agnizes none;
Nor message hears or bears, and from that ground
Without distinction chases every one;
While Silence plays the scout and walks his round,
Equipt with shoes of felt and mantle brown,
And motions from a distance all who meet
Him on his circuit, from the dim retreat.

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XCV.

The angel him approaches quietly,
And, "'Tis God's bidding" (whispers in his ear)
"That thou Rinaldo and his company,
"Brought in his sovereign's aid, to Paris steer:
"But that thou do the deed so silently,
"That not a Saracen their cry shall hear;
"So that their army come upon the foe,
"Ere he from Fame of their arrival know."

XCVI.

Silence to him no otherwise replied
Than signing with his head that he obeyed:
(And took his post behind the heavenly guide)
Both at one flight to Picardy conveyed.
The angel moved those bands of valour tried,
And short to them a tedious distance made:
Whom he to Paris safe transports; while none
Is conscious that a miracle is done.

XCVII.

Silence the advancing troop kept skirting round,
In front, and flank, and rear of the array;
Above the band he spread a mist profound,
And everywhere beside 'twas lightsome day;
Nor through the impeding fog the shrilling sound
Of horn was heard, without, or trumpet's bray.
He next the hostile paynims went to find,
And with I know not what made deaf and blind.

XCVIII.

While with such haste his band Rinaldo led,
That him an angel well might seem to guide,
And in such silence moved, that nought was said
Or heard of this upon the paynim side;
King Agramant his infantry had spread
Throughout fair Paris' suburbs, and beside
The foss, and underneath the walls; that day
To make upon the place his worst assay.

XCIX.

He who the Moorish monarch's force would tell,
Which Charlemagne this day will have to meet,
In wooded Apennine might count as well
The trees upon its back, or waves that beat
(What time the troubled waters highest swell)
Against the Mauritanian Atlas' feet;
Or watch at midnight with how many eyes
The furtive works of lovers Heaven espies.

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C.

The larum-bells, loud-sounding through the air,
Stricken with frequent blows, the town affray;
And in the crowded temples every where
Movement of lips and hands upraised to pray
Are seen: if treasure seemed to God so fair
As to our foolish thoughts, upon this day
The holy consistory had bid mould
Their every statue upon earth in gold.

CI.

Lamenting may be heard the aged just,
In that they were reserved for such a woe;
Calling those happy that in sacred dust
Were buried many and many a year ago.
But the bold youths who, valiant and robust,
Small thought upon the approaching ills bestow,
Scorning their elders' counsel, here and there
Hurrying, in fury, to the walls repair.

CII.

Here might you paladin and baron ken,
King, duke, and marquis, count and chivalry,
And soldier, foreigner or citizen,
Ready for honour and for Christ to die;
Who, eager to assail the Saracen,
On Charlemagne to lower the bridges cry.
He witnesses with joy their martial heat,
But to permit their sally deems not meet.

CIII.

And them he ordered in convenient post,
The advance of the barbarians to impede:
For *this* would ill suffice a numerous host,
To *that* he was content that few should speed.
Some worked at the machines, some wild-fire tost,
All ranged according to the separate need.
Charles, never in one place, with restless care
Provides defence and succour every where.

CIV.

Paris is seated on a spacious plain,
I' the midst—the heart of France, more justly say
A stream flows into it, and forth again;
But first, the passing waters, as they stray,
An island form, and so secure the main
And better part, dividing on their way.
The other two (three separate quarters note),
Within the river girds, without the moat.

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CV.

The town, whose walls for miles in circuit run,
Might well have been attacked from many a side;
Yet, for he would assail it but on one,
Nor willingly his scattered troops divide,
Westward beyond the stream Troyano's son
Retired, from thence the assailing bands to guide.
In that, he neither city had nor plain
Behind, but what was his, as far as Spain.

CVI.

Where'er the walls of Paris wound about,
Large ammunition had king Charles purveyed;
Strengthening with dyke each quarter held in doubt;
And had within trench, drain, and casemate made:
And where the river entered and went out,
Had thickest chains across the channel laid.
But most of all, his prudent cares appear
Where there is greatest cause for present fear.

CVII.

With eyes of Argus, Pepin's valiant son,
Where Agramant was bent to storm foresaw,
And every thing forestalled, ere yet begun
By the bold followers of Mahound's law.
With Isolier, Grandonio, Falsiron,
Serpentin, Balugantes, and Ferrau,
And what beside he out of Spain had led,
Marsilius was in arms, their valiant head.

CVIII.

With old Sobrino, on the left of Seine,
Pulian and Dardinel d'Almontes meet,
With Oran's giant king, to swell the train:
Six cubits is the prince, from head to feet.
But why move I my pen with greater pain
Than these men move their arms? for in his heat
King Rodomont exclaims, blaspheming sore,
Nor can contain his furious spirit more,

CIX.

As swarming to assail the pastoral bowl,
With sound of stridulous wing, through summer sky,
Or relics of a feast, their luscious dole,
Repair the ready numbers of the fly;
As starlings to the vineyard's crimsoning pole
With the ripe clusters charged,—heaven's concave high
Filling, as they advanced, with noise and shout,
Fast hurried to the storm the Moorish rout.

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CX.

Upon their walls the Christians in array,
With lance, sword, axe, and stone and wild-fire tost,
The assaulted city guard without dismay,
And little reck the proud barbarian's boast:
Nor when death snatches this or that away,
Does any one in fear refuse his post.
Into the fosse below the paynim foes
Return, amid a storm of strokes and blows.

CXI.

Nor in this war is iron plied alone,
But mighty masses and whole bulwarks fall,
And top of tower, huge piece of bastion,
And with much toil disrupted, solid wall;
While streams of boiling water pouring down,
Insufferably the advancing paynims gall:
An ill-resisted rain, which, in despite
Of helmet, makes its way, and blinds the sight.

CXII.

And this than iron spear offended more:
Then how much more the mist of lime-dust fine!
Then how the emptied vessel, burning sore
With nitre, sulphur, pitch, and turpentine!
Nor idle lie the fiery hoops in store,[13]
Which, wreathed about with flaming tresses, shine.
These at the foemen scaled, upon all hands,
Form cruel garlands for the paynim bands,

CXIII.

Meanwhile, up to the walls the second crew
Fierce Sarza's king has driven, accompanied
By bold Ormida and Buraldo, who
The Garamantes and Marmonda guide;
Clarindo and Loridano; nor from view,
It seems, will Setta's valiant monarch hide:
Morocco's king and he of Cosca go
With these, that men their martial worth may know.

CXIV.

With crimson Rodomont his banner stains,
And in the vermeil field a lion shows;
Who, bitted by a maid, to curb and reins
His savage mouth disdains not to unclose.
Himself in the submissive lion feigns
The haughty Rodomont, and would suppose
In her who curbs him with the bit and string,
Doralice daughter to Grenada's king;

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CXV.

Whom Mandricardo took, as I before
Related, and from whom, and in what wise.
Even she it was, whom Sarza's monarch more
Loved than his realm,—beyond his very eyes:
And valour showed for her and courteous lore,
Not knowing yet she was another's prize.
If he had,—then,—then first,—the story known,
Even what he did that day, he would have done.

CXVI.

At once the foes a thousand ladders rear,
Against the wall by the assailants shored,
Two manned each round; the second, in the rear,
Urged on the first; the third the second gored.
One mounts the wall through valour, one through fear,
And all attempt perforce the dangerous ford;
For cruel Rodomont, of Argier, slays
Or smites the wretched laggard who delays.

CXVII.

'Tis thus, 'mid fire and ruin, all assay
To mount the wall; but others to assure
Themselves, some safer passage seek, where they
Will have least pain and peril to endure.
Rodomont only scorns by any way
To wend, except by what is least secure;
And in that desperate case, where others made
Their offerings, cursed the god to whom they prayed.

CXVIII.

He in a cuirass, hard and strong, was drest:
A dragon-skin it was with scaly quilt,
Which erst secured the manly back and breast
Of his bold ancestor, that Babel built;
Who hoped the rule of heaven from God to wrest,
And him would from his golden dome have split.
Perfect, and for this end alone, were made
Helmet and shield as well as trenchant blade.

CXIX.

Nor Rodomont to Nimrod yields in might,
Proud and untamed; and who would not forbear
To scale the lofty firmament till night,
Could he in this wide world descry the stair.
He stood not, he, to mark the bulwark's plight,
Nor if the fosse of certain bottom were.
He past, ran,—rather flew across the moat,
Plunging in filth and water to his throat.

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CXX.

Dripping and foul with water and with weeds,
'Mid fire and stone, and arbalests, and bows,
On drives the chief; as through the marshy reeds,
The wild-swine of our own Mallea[14] goes;
Who makes large day-light wheresoe'er he speeds,
Parting the sedge with breast and tusk and nose.
The paynim, safe in buckler lifted high,
Scorns not the wall alone, but braves the sky.

CXXI.

Rodomont has no sooner gained the shore,
Than on the wooden bartizan he stands,
Within the city walls, a bridge that bore
(Roomy and large) king Charles's Christian bands.[15]
Here many a skull is riven, here men take more
Than monkish tonsure at the warrior's hands:
Heads fly and arms; and to the ditch a flood
Runs streaming from the wall of crimson blood.

CXXII.

He drops the shield; and with two-handed sway
Wielding his sword, duke Arnulph he offends,
Who came from whence, into the briny bay,
The water of the rapid Rhine descends.
No better than the sulphur keeps away
The advancing flame, the wretch his life defends.
He his last shudder gives, and tumbles dead;
Cleft downwards, a full palm from neck and head.

CXXIII.

At one back-stroke sir Spineloccio true,
Anselmo, Prando, and Oldrado fell;
The narrow place and thickly-swarming crew
Make the wide-circling blow so fully tell.
The first half Flemings were, the residue
Are Normans, who the list of slaughter swell.
Orghetto of Maganza, he from brow
To breast divides, and thence to paunch below.

CXXIV.

Down from the wall Andropono and Moschine
He cast into the ditch: a priest the first;
The second, but a worshipper of wine,
Drained, at a draught, whole runlets in his thirst;
Aye wonted simple water to decline,
Like viper's blood or venom: now immersed
In this, he perishes amid that slaughter;
And, what breeds most affliction, dies by water.

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CXXV.

Lewis the Provencal is cleft in two;
Arnold of Thoulouse through the breast before;
Hubert of Tours, sir Dionysius, Hugh,
And Claud, pour forth their ghosts in reeking gore.
Odo, Ambaldo, Satallon ensue,
And Walter next; of Paris are the four—
With others, that by me unmentioned fall,
Who cannot tell the name and land of all.

CXXVI.

The crowd, by Rodomont of Sarza led,[16]
The ladders lift, and many places scale.
Here the Parisians make no further head,
Who find their first defence of small avail.
Full well they know that danger more to dread
Within awaits the foemen who assail;
Because between the wall and second mound
A fosse descends, wide, horrid, and profound.

CXXVII.

Besides, that ours, with those upon the height,
War from below, like valiant men and stout,
New files succeed to those who fall in fight,
Where, on the interior summit, stand the rout,
Who gall with lances, and a whistling flight
Of darts, the mighty multitude without;
Many of whom, I ween, that post would shun,
If it were not for royal Ulien's son.*

CXXVIII.

But he still heartened some, and chid the rest,
And forced them forward to their sore alarm.
One paynim's head he cleft, and other's breast,
Who turned about to fly; and of the swarm
Some shoved and pushed and to the encounter prest,
Close-grappled by the collar, hair, or arm:
And downwards from the wall such numbers threw,
The ditch was all too narrow for the crew.

CXXIX.

While so the foes descend, or rather fling
Themselves into the perilous profound;
And thence by many ladders try to spring
Upon the summit of the second mound,
King Rodomont, as if he had a wing
Upon his every member, from the ground
Upraised his weight, and vaulted clean across,
Loaded with all his arms, the yawning fosse.

* Rodomont.

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CXXX.

The moat of thirty feet, not less, he cleared,
As dexterously as leaps the greyhound fleet,
Nor at his lighting louder noise was heard
Than if he had worn felt beneath his feet.
He now of *this*, now *that*, the mantle sheared;
As though of pewter, not of iron beat,
Or rather of soft rind their arms had been:
So matchless was his force and sword so keen!

CXXXI.

This while, not idle, those of ours had laid
Snares in the inner moat, a well-charged mine:
Where broom and thick fascines, all over paid
With swarthy pitch, in plenty intertwine.
Yet is not this by any eye surveyed,
Though they from bank to bank that hollow line,
Filling the bottom well-nigh to the brink;
And countless vessels the defenders sink.

CXXXII.

Charged with salt-petre, oil, or sulphur pale,
One and the other, or with such like gear;
While ours, intent the paynims that assail
The town, should pay their daring folly dear,
(Who from the ditch on different parts would scale
The inner bulwark's platform) when they hear
The appointed signal which their comrades raise,
Set, at fit points, the wildfire in a blaze.

CXXXIII.

For that the moat was full from side to side,
The scattered flames united into one,
And mounted to such height, they well-nigh dried
The watery bosom of the moon; a dun
And dismal cloud above extending wide,
Dimmed every glimpse of light, and hid the sun:
A fearful crash, with a continued sound,
Like a long peal of thunder, shook the ground.

CXXXIV.

A horrid concert, a rude harmony
Of deep lament, and yell and shriek, which came
From those poor wretches in extremity,
Perishing through their furious leader's blame,
Was heard, as in strange concord, to agree
With the fierce crackling of the murderous flame.
No more of this, no more!—Here, sir, I close
My canto, hoarse, and needing short repose.

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CANTO XV.

ARGUMENT.

Round about Paris every where are spread
The assailing hosts of Africa and Spain.
Astolpho home by Logistilla sped,
Binds first Caligorantes with his chain;
Next from Orrilo's trunk divides the head;
With whom Sir Aquilant had warred in vain,
And Grypha bold: next Sarconet discerns,
Ill tidings of his lady Grypha learns.

I.

THOUGH Conquest fruit of skill or fortune be,
To conquer always is a glorious thing.
'Tis true, indeed, a bloody victory
Is to a chief less honour wont to bring;
And that fair field is famed eternally,
And he who wins it merits worshipping,
Who, saving from all harm his own, without
Loss to his followers, puts the foe to rout.

II.

You, sir, earned worthy praise, when you o'erbore
The lion of such might by sea, and so
Did by him, where he guarded either shore
From Francolino to the mouth of Pò,
That I, though yet again I heard him roar,
If you were present, should my fear forego.
How fields are fitly won was then made plain;
For we were rescued, and your foemen slain.[1]

III.

This was the Paynim little skilled to do.
Who was but daring to his proper loss;
And to the moat impelled his meiny, who
One and all perished in the burning fosse.
The mighty gulf had not contained the crew,
But that, devouring those who sought to cross,
Them into dust the flame reduced, that room
Might be for all within the crowded tomb.

IV.

Of twenty thousand warriors thither sent,
Died nineteen thousand in the fiery pit;
Who to the fosse descended, ill content;
But so their leader willed, of little wit:
Extinguished amid such a blaze, and spent
By the devouring flame the Christians lit.
And Rodomont, occasion of their woes,
Exempted from the mighty mischief goes:

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V.

For he to the inner bank, by foes possest,
Across the ditch had vaulted wondrously:
Had he within it been, among the rest,
It sure had been his last assault. His eye
He turns, and when the wild-fires, which infest
The infernal vale, he sees ascend so high,
And hears his people's moan and dying screams,
With imprecations dread he Heaven blasphemes.

VI.

This while a band King Agramant had brought,
To make a fierce assault upon a gate:
For while the cruel battle here was fought,
Wherein so many sufferers met their fate,
This haply unprovided had he thought
With fitting guard. Upon the monarch wait
King Bambirago, 'mid his knights of price,
And Baliverso, sink of every vice;

VII.

And Corinêus of Mulga, Prusion,
The wealthy monarch of the blessed isles;
Malabuferzo, he who fills the throne
Of Fez, where a perpetual summer smiles;
And other noble lords, and many a one
Well-armed and tried; and others 'mid their files,
Naked, and base, whose hearts in martial fields
Had found no shelter from a thousand shields.

VIII.

But all things counter to the hopes ensue
Of Agramant upon this side; within,
In person, girded by a gallant crew,
Is Charlemagne, with many a paladin:
Ogier the Dane, King Salamon, the two
Guidos are seen, and either Angelin;
Bavaria's duke,* and Ganelon are here,
Avino, Avolio, Otho, and Berlinghier:

IX.

And of inferior count withal, a horde
Of Lombards, French, and Germans, without end;
Who, every one, in presence of his lord,
To rank among the valiantest contend.
This will I in another place record;
Who here a mighty duke perforce attend,
Who signs to me from far, and prays that I
Will not omit him in my history.

* Namus.

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X.

'Tis time that I should measure back my way
Thither, where I Astolpho left of yore;
Who, in long exile, loathing more to stay,
Burnt with desire to tread his native shore;
As hopes to him had given the sober fay,
Who quelled Alcina by her better lore,
She with all care would send the warrior back
By the securest and the freest track.

XI.

And thus by her a barque is fitted out;
—A better galley never ploughed the sea;
And Logistilla wills, for aye in doubt
Of hindrance from Alcina's treachery,
That good Andronica, with squadron stout,
And chaste Sophrosina, with him shall be,
Till to the Arabian Sea, beneath their care,
Or to the Persian Gulf he safe repair.

XII.

By Scyth and Indian she prefers the peer
Should coast, and by the Nabatæan reign;
Content he, after such a round, should veer
For Persian gulf, or Erithræan main,
Rather than for that Boreal palace steer,
Where angry winds aye vex the rude domain:
So ill, at seasons, favoured by the sun,
That there, for months together, light is none.

XIII.

Next, when she all in readiness espied,
Her license to depart the prudent fay
Accorded to the duke, first fortified
With counsel as to things too long to say;
And that he might no more by charms be stayed
In place from whence he could not wend his way,
Him with a useful book and fair purveyed,
And ever for her love to wear it prayed.

XIV.

How man should guard himself from magic cheats
The book instructed, which the fay bestowed;
At the end or the beginning, where it treats
Of such, an index and appendix showed.
Another gift, which in its goodly feats
All other gifts excelled, to her he owed;
This was a horn, which made whatever wight
Should hear its clang betake himself to flight.

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XV.

I say, the horn is of such horrid sound,
That wheresoe'er 'tis heard, all fly for fear;
Nor in the world is one of heart so sound
That would not fly, should he the bugle hear.
Wind, thunder, and the shock which rives the ground,
Come not, in aught, the hideous clangour near.
With thanks did the good Englishman receive
The gift, and of the fairy took his leave.

XVI.

Quitting the port and smoother waves, they stand
To sea, with favouring wind which blows astern;
And (coasting) round the rich and populous land
Of odoriferous Ind the vessels turn,
Opening a thousand isles on either hand,
Scattered about that sea, till they discern
The land of Thomas; here the pilot veers
His ready tiller, and more northward steers.[2]

XVII.

Astolpho, furrowing that ocean hoar,
Marks, as he coasts, the wealthy land at ease.
Ganges amid the whitening waters roar,
Nigh skirting now the golden Chersonese;
Taprobana with Cori next, and sees
The frith which chafes against its double shore;
Makes distant Cochin, and with favouring wind
Issues beyond the boundaries of Ind.[3]

XVIII.

Scouring at large broad ocean, with a guide
So faithful and secure, the cavalier
Questions Andronica, if from that side
Named from the westering sun, of this our sphere,
Bark, which with oars or canvas stemmed the tide,
On eastern sea was wonted to appear;
—And could a wight, who loosed from Indian strand,
Reach France or Britain, without touching land.

XIX.

Andronica to England's duke replies:
"Know that this earth is girt about with seas,
"And all to one another yield supplies,
"Whether the circling waters boil or freeze:
"But, since the Æthiops' land before us lies,
"Extending southward many long degrees,
"Across his waters, some one has supposed
"A barrier here to Neptune interposed.

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XX.

"Hence bark from this Levant of Ind is none
"Which weighs, to shape her course for Europe's shore:
"Nor navigates from Europe any one,
"Our Oriental regions to explore;
"Fain to retrace alike the course begun
"By the mid land, extending wide before:
"Weening (its limits of such length appear)
"That it must join another hemisphere.

XXI.

"But in the course of circling years I view
"From farthest lands which catch the western ray,
"New Argonauts put forth, and Tiphys new
"Opening, till now an undiscovered way.
"Others I see coast Afric, and pursue
"So far the negroes' burning shore, that they
"Pass the far sign, from whence, on his return,
"The sun moves hither, leaving Capricorn;[4]

XXII.

"And find the limit of this length of land,
"Which makes a single sea appear as two;
"Who, scouring in their frigates every strand,
"Pass Ind and Arab isles, or Persian through:
"Others I see who leave, on either hand,
"The banks, which stout Alcides cleft in two,
"And in the manner of the circling sun,
"To seek new lands and new creations run.

XXIII.

"The imperial flags and holy cross I know,
"Fixed on the verdant shore; see some upon
"The shattered barks keep guard, and others go
"A-field, by whom new countries will be won;
"Ten chase a thousand of the flying foe,
"Realms beyond Ind subdued by Arragon;
"And see all, wheresoe'er the warriors wend,
"To the fifth Charles' triumphant captains bend.

XXIV.

"That this way should be hidden was God's will
"Of old, and ere 'twas known long time should run;
"Nor will he suffer its discovery, till
"The sixth and seventh century be done.
"And he delays his purpose to fulfil,
"In that he would subject the world to one,
"The justest and most fraught with prudent lore
"Of emperors, since Augustus, or before.

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XXV.

"Of Arragon and Austria's blood I see
"On the left bank of Rhine a monarch bred;
"No sovereign is so famed in history,
"Of all whose goodly deeds are heard or read.
"Astræa reïnthroned by him will be,—
"Rather restored to life, long seeming dead;
"And Virtues with her into exile sent,
"By him shall be recalled from banishment.[5]

XXVI.

"For such desert, Heaven's bounty not alone
"Designs he should the imperial garland bear,—
"Augustus', Trajan's, Mark's, Severus', crown;
"But *that* of every farthest land should wear,
"Which here and there extends, as yet unknown,
"Yielding no passage to the sun and year;
"And wills that in his time Christ's scattered sheep
"Should be one flock, beneath one Shepherd's keep.

XXVII.

"And that this be accomplished with more ease,
"Writ in the skies from all eternity,
"Captains, invincible by lands and seas,
"Shall heavenly Providence to him supply.
"I mark Hernando Cortez bring, 'mid these,
"New cities under Cæsar's dynasty,
"And kingdoms in the Orient so remote,
"That we of these in India have no note.[6]

XXVIII.

"With Prospero Colonna, puissant peer,
"A marquis of Pescara I behold;—
"A youth of Guasto next, who render dear
"Hesperia to the flower-de-luce of gold;
"I see prepared to enter the career
"This third, who shall the laurel win and hold;
"As a good horse before the rest will dart,
"And first attain the goal, though last to start.[7]

XXIX.

"I see such faith, such valour in the deeds
"Of young Alphonso (such his name) confest,
"He in his unripe age,—nor he exceeds
"His sixth and twentieth year,—at Cæsar's hest,
"(A mighty trust) the imperial army leads:
"Saving which, Cæsar not alone the rest
"Of his fair empire saves, but may the world
"Reduce, with ensigns by this chief unfurled.

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XXX.

"As with these captains, where the way by land
"Is free, he spreads the ancient empire's sway,
"So on the sea, which severs Europe's strand
"From Afric, open to the southern day,
"When with good Doria linked in friendly band,
"Victorious he shall prove in every fray.
"This is that Andrew Doria who will sweep
"From pirates, on all sides, your midland deep.

XXXI.

"Pompey, though he chased rovers everywhere,
"Was not his peer; for ill the thievish brood
"Vanquished by him, in puissance, could compare
"With the most mighty realm that ever stood.
"But Doria singly will of the corsair
"With his own forces purge the briny flood:
"So that I see each continent and isle
"Quake at his name, from Calpe to the Nile.

XXXII.

"Beneath the faith, beneath the warrantry
"Of the redoubted chief, of whom I say
"I see Charles enter fertile Italy,
"To which this captain clears the monarch's way;
"But on his country, not himself, that fee
"Shall he bestow, which is his labours' pay;
"And beg her freedom, where himself perchance
"Another would to sovereign rule advance.[8]

XXXIII.

"The pious love he bears his native land
"Honours him more than any battle's gain
"Which Julius ever won on Afric's strand,
"Or in thine isle,[9] France, Thessaly, or Spain.
"Nor great Octavius does more praise command,
"Nor Anthony who jousted for the reign,
"With equal arms: in that the wrong outweighs
"—Done to their native land—their every praise.

XXXIV.

"Let these, and every other wight who tries
"To subject a free country, blush for shame,
"Nor dare in face of man to lift his eyes,
"Where he hears Andrew Doria's honoured name!
"To him I see Charles other meed supplies;
"For he beside his leaders' common claim,
"Bestows upon the chief the sumptuous state,
"Whence Norman bands their power in Puglia date.[10]

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XXXV.

"Not only to this captain courtesy
"Shall Charles display, still liberal of his store;
"But to all those who for the empery
"In his emprizes have not spared their gore.
"Him to bestow a town,—a realm—I see,
"Upon a faithful friend, rejoicing more,
"And on all such as have good service done,
"Than in new kingdom and new empire won."

XXXVI.

Thus of the victories, by land and main,
Which, when long course of years shall be complete,
Charles' worthy captains for their lord will gain,
Andronica did with Astolpho treat.
This while, now loosening, tightening now, the rein
On the eastern winds, which blow upon their fleet,
Making *this* serve or *that*, her comrades stands;
While the blasts rise or sink as she commands.

XXXVII.

This while they saw, as for their port they made,
How wide the Persian sea extends to sight;
Whence in few days the squadron was conveyed
Nigh the famed gulf from ancient Magi hight;[11]
Here they found harbourage: and here were stayed
Their wandering barks, which stern to shore were dight.
Secure from danger from Alcina's wrath,
The duke by land continued hence his path.

XXXVIII.

He pricks through many a field and forest blind,
By many a vale and many a mountain gray;
Where robbers, now before and now behind,
Oft threat the peer by night or open day;
Lion and dragon oft of poisonous kind,
And other savage monsters cross his way:
But he no sooner has his bugle wound,
Than these are scared and scattered by the sound.

XXXIX.

Through Araby the blest he fares, where grow
Thickets of myrrh, and gums odòrous ooze,
Where the sole phœnix makes her nest, although
The world is all before her where to choose;
And to the avenging sea which whelmed the foe
Of Israël, his way the duke pursues;
In which King Pharaoh and his host were lost;
From whence he to the land of heroes crost.[12]

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XL.

Astolpho along Trajan's channel goes,[13]
Upon that horse which has no earthly peer,
And moves so lightly, that the soft sand shows
No token of the passing cavalier;
Who prints not grass, prints not the driven snows,
—Who dry-shod would the briny billows clear,
And strains so nimbly in the course, he wind
And thunderbolt and arrow leaves behind:—

XLI.

Erst Argalìa's courser, which was born
From a close union of the wind and flame,
And, nourished not by hay or heartening corn,
Fed on pure air, and Rabican his name.
His way the bearer of the magic horn
Following, where Nile received that river, came;
But ere he at its outlet could arrive,
Towards him saw a pinnace swiftly drive.

XLII.

A hermit in the poop the bark did guide,
With snowy beard descending to mid breast;
Who when from far the Paladin he spied,
Him to ascend his ready pinnace prest.
"My son, unless thou loathest life, (he cried)
"And wouldst that Death to-day thy course arrest,
"Content thee in my bark to cross the water;
"For yonder path conducts thee straight to slaughter.

XLIII.

"Within six miles, no further, shalt thou light"
(Pursued the hermit) "on the bloody seat,
"Where dwells a giant, horrible to sight,
"Exceeding every stature by eight feet.
"From him wayfaring man or errant knight
"Would vainly hope with life to make retreat;
"For some the felon quarters, some he flays,
"And some he swallows quick, and some he slays.

XLIV.

"He, 'mid the cruel horrors he intends,
"Takes pleasure in a net, by cunning hands
"Contrived, which near his mansion he extends;
"So well concealed beneath the crumbling sands,
"That whoso uninstructed thither wends,
"Nought of the subtle mischief understands;
"And so the giant scares him with his cries,
"That he within the toils in terror flies;

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XLV.

" Whom with loud laughter, to his seat hard by
" He drags along, enveloped in his snare;
" And knight and damsel views with equal eye,
" And for his prisoners' worth has little care.
" Then, having sucked their brains and life-blood dry,
" Casts forth their bones upon the desert lair;
" And round about his griesly palace pins,
" For horrid ornament, their bloody skins.

XLVI.

" Take this,—my son, oh! take this other way,
" Which thee will to the sea in safety guide."
" I thank thee, holy father, for thy say,
(To him the fearless cavalier replied)
" But cannot peril against honour weigh,
" Far dearer than my life. To the other side
" Me vainly dost thou move to pass the wave;
" Rather for this I seek the giant's cave.

XLVII.

" I with dishonour life to flight may owe;
" But worse than death loath thus to save my head.
" The worst that can befall me if I go,
" Is I my blood shall with the others shed·
" But if on me such mercy God bestow,
" That I remain alive, the giant dead,
" Secure for thousands shall I make the ways;
" So that the greater good the risque o'erpays.

XLVIII.

" I peril but the single life of one
" Against the safety of the countless rest."
—" Go then in peace," (the other said) " my son,
" And to thy succour, from among the blest,
" May God dispatch the Archangel Michael down."
—And him, with that, the simple hermit blest.
Astolpho pricks along Nile's rosy strand,
More in his horn confiding than his brand.

XLIX.

Between the mighty river and the fen,
A path upon the sandy shore doth lie,
Barred by the giant's solitary den,
Cut off from converse with humanity.
About it heads and naked limbs of men
Were fixed, the victims of his cruelty.
Window or battlement was not, whence strung,
Might not be seen some wretched prisoner hung.

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L.

As in hill-farm or castle, fenced with moat,
The hunter, mindful what his dangers were,
Aye fastens on his door the shaggy coat
And horrid paws and monstrous head of bear;
So showed the giant those of greatest note,
Who, thither brought, had perished in his snare.
The bones of countless others wide were spread,
And every ditch with human blood was red.

LI.

Caligorant was standing at the gate
(For so was the despiteous monster hight);
Who decked his house with corpses, as for state
Some theirs with cloth of gold and scarlet dight.
He scarce contained himself for joy, so great
His pleasure, when the duke appeared in sight;
For 'twas two months complete, a third was near,
Since by that road had past a cavalier.

LII.

Towards the marish, where green rushes grow,
He hastes, intending from that covert blind
To double on his unsuspecting foe,
And issue on the cavalier behind:
For him to drive into the net, below
The sand, the griesly giant had designed;
As others trapt he had been wont to see,
Brought thither by their evil destiny.

LIII.

When him the wary paladin espied,
He stopt his courser, not without great heed,
Lest he into the covert snare might ride,
Forewarned of this by the good hermit's rede.
Here to his horn for succour he applied,
Nor failed its wonted virtue in this need:
It smote the giant's heart with such affright,
That he turned back, and homeward fled outright.

LIV.

Astolpho blew, still watchful of surprise,
Weening to see the engine sprung: fast flew
The giant,—as if heart as well as eyes
The thief had lost,—nor whitherward he knew:
Such is his fear, he kens not as he flies,
How his own covert mischief to eschew:
He runs into the net, which closing round,
Hampers the wretch, and drags him to the ground.

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LV.

Astolpho, who beholds his bulky prey
Fall bodily, drives thither at full speed,
Secure himself, and, bent to make him pay
The price of slaughtered thousands, quits his steed.
Yet after, deems a helpless wight to slay
No valour were, but rather foul misdeed:
For him, arms, neck, and feet so closely tied,
He could not shake himself, the warrior spied.

LVI.

With subtle thread of steel had Vulcan wrought
The net of old, and with such cunning pain,
He, who to break its weakest mesh had sought,
Would have bestowed his time and toil in vain.
It was with this he Mars and Venus caught,
Who, hands and feet, were fettered by the chain:
Nor did the jealous husband weave the thread
For aught, but to surprise that pair in bed.

LVII.

Mercury from the smith conveyed the prize,
Wanting to take young Chloris in the snare;
Sweet Chloris, who behind Aurora flies,
At rise of sun, through fields of liquid air,
And from her gathered garment, through the skies,
Scatters the violet, rose, and lily fair.
He for this nymph his toils so deftly set,
One day, in air he took her with the net.

LVIII.

The nymph (it seems) was taken as she flew,
Where the great Æthiop river meets the brine:
The net was treasured in Canopus, through
Successive ages, in Anubis' shrine.
After three thousand years, Caligorant drew
The sacred relict from the place divine:
Whence with the net the impious thief returned,
Who robbed the temple and the city burned.

LIX.

He fixed it here, beneath the sandy plain,
In mode, that all the travellers whom he chased
Ran into it, and the engine was with pain
Touched, ere it arms, and feet, and neck embraced.
From this the good Astolpho took a chain,
And with the gyve his hands behind him laced:
His arms and breast he swaddled in such guise,
He could not loose himself; then let him rise.

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LX.

After, his other knots unfastening,
(For he was turned more gentle than a maid)
Astolpho, as a show, the thief would bring,
By city, borough-town, and farm conveyed;
The net as well: than which no quainter thing
Was ever by the file and hammer made.
On him, like sumpter-nag he laid the load,
In triumph led, behind him, on his road.

LXI.

Him helm and shield he gives alike to bear,
As to a valet; hence proceeds the peer,
Gladdening the fearful pilgrim everywhere,
Who joys to think, henceforth his way is clear.
So far an end does bold Astolpho fare,
He is to Memphis' tombs already near,—
Memphis renowned for pyramids; in sight,
He marks the populous Cairo opposite.

LXII.

Ran all the people in tumultuous tide,
To see him drag the unmeasur'd wight along.
"How can it be," (each to his fellow cried)
"That one so weak could master one so strong?"
Scarce can Astolpho put the press aside,
So close from every part their numbers throng;
While all admire him as a cavalier
Of mighty worth, and make him goodly cheer.

LXIII.

Then Cairo was not such, as common cry
Pronounces in our age that costly seat:
—That eighteen thousand districts ill supply
Lodging to those who in her markets meet;
—And though the houses are three stories high,
Numbers are forced to sleep in the open street;
And that the soldan has a palace there
Of wonderous size, and passing rich and fair;

LXIV.

And therein (Christian renegadoes all)
Keeps fifteen thousand vassals for his needs,
Beneath one roof supplied with bower and stall,
Themselves, and wives, and families, and steeds.
The duke desired to see the river's fall,
And how far Nile into the sea proceeds,
At Damietta; where wayfaring wight,
He heard, was prisoner made, or slain outright.

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LXV.

For at Nile's outlet there, beside his bed,
A sturdy thief was sheltered in a tower,
Alike the native's and the stranger's dread,
Wont even to Cairo's gate the road to scower.
Him no one could resist, and, it was said,
That man to slay the felon had no power.
A hundred thousand wounds he had in strife
Received, yet none could ever take his life.

LXVI.

To see if he could break the thread which tied
The felon's life, upon his way the knight
Set forward, and to Damietta hied,
To find Orrilo, so the thief was hight;
Thence to the river's outlet past, and spied
The sturdy castle on the margin dight;
Harboured in which the enchanted demon lay,
The fruit of a hobgoblin and a fay.

LXVII.

He here Orrilo and two knights in mail
Found at fierce strife: the two ill held their own
Against him; so Orrilo did assail
The warlike pair, although himself alone;
And how much either might in arms avail,
Fame through the universal world had blown.
Of Oliviero's seed was either plant;
Gryphon the white, and sable Aquilant.

LXVIII.

The necromancer had this while, (to say
The truth,) with vantage on his side, begun
The fight, who brought a monster to the fray,
Found only in those parts, and wont to won
Ashore or under water, and to prey,
For food, on human bodies; feeding on
Poor mariners and travelling men, who fare,
Of the impending danger unaware.

LXIX.

The monster, slaughtered by the brethren two,
Upon the sand beside the haven lies;
And hence no wrong they to Orrilo do,
Assailing him together in this guise.
Him they dismembered often, and not slew:
Nor he,—because dismembered,—ever dies;
For he replaces leg or hand like wax,
Which the good faulchion from his body hacks.

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LXX.

Gryphon and Aquilant by turns divide,
Now to the teeth, now breast, the enchanted wight.
The fruitless blow Orrilo does deride,
While the two baffled warriors rage for spite.
Let him who falling silver has espied
(Which mercury by alchymists is hight),
Scatter and reunite each broken member,
Hearing my tale, what he has seen remember.

LXXI.

If the thief's head be severed by the pair,
He lights and staggers till he finds it: now,
Uptaken by the nose or by the hair,
And fastened to the neck, I know not how.
This sometimes Gryphon takes, and, whirled through air,
Whelms in the stream; but bootless is the throw:
For like a fish can fierce Orrilo swim;
And safely, with the head, regains the brim.

LXXII.

Two ladies, meetly clad in fair array,
One damsel was in black and one in white,
And who had been the occasion of that fray,
Stood by to gaze upon the cruel fight:
Either of these was a benignant fay,
Whose care had nourished one and the other knight,
Oliver's children; when the babes forlorn
They from the claws of two huge birds had torn.

LXXIII.

Since, from Gismonda they had these conveyed,
Borne to a distance from their native sky.
But more to say were needless, since displayed
To the whole world has been their history.
Though the author has the father's name mis-said;
One for another (how I know not, I)
Mistaking. Now this fearful strife the pair
Of warriors waged at both the ladies' prayer.

LXXIV.

Though it was noon in the happy islands, day
Had vanished in this clime, displaced by night;
And, underneath the moon's uncertain ray,
And ill-discerned, were all things hid from sight;
When to the fort Orrilo took his way.
Since both the sable sister and the white
Were pleased the furious battle to defer,
Till a new sun should in the horizon stir.

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LXXV.

The duke, who by their ensigns, and yet more
Had by the sight of many a vigorous blow,
Gryphon and Aquilant long time before
Agnized, to greet the brethren was not slow;
And they, who in the peer, victorious o'er
The giant, whom he led a captive, know
The BARON OF THE PARD, (so styled at court)
Him to salute, with no less love resort.

LXXVI.

The ladies to repose the warriors led
To a fair palace near, their sumptuous seat:
Thence issuing courtly squire and damsel sped,
Them with lit torches in mid-way to meet.
Their goodly steeds they quit, there well bested,
Put off their arms, and in a garden sweet
Discern the ready supper duly laid
Fast by, where a refreshing fountain played.

LXXVII.

Here they bid bind the giant on the green,
Fast-tethered by a strong and weighty chain
To a tough oak, whose ancient trunk they ween
May well be proof against a single strain;
With that, by ten good serjeants overseen,
Lest he by night get loose, and so the train
Assault and haply harm; while careless they
Without a guard and unsuspecting lay.

LXXVIII.

At the abundant and most sumptuous board,
With costly viands (its least pleasure) fraught,
The longest topic for discourse afford
Orrilo's prowess, and the marvel wrought;
For head or arm dissevered by the sword,
They (who upon the recent wonder thought)
Might think a dream to see him re-unite,
And but return more furious to the fight.

LXXIX.

Astolpho in his book had found exprest
(That which prescribed a remedy for spell)
How he who of one hair deprived the pest,
Only could him in battle hope to quell:
But this plucked out or sheared, he from his breast
Parforce the felon's spirit would expell.
So says the volume; but instructs not where,
'Mid locks so thickly set, to find the hair.

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LXXX.

The duke no less with hope of conquest glows
Than if the palm he has already won;
As he that hopes with small expense of blows
To pluck the hair, the wizard-wight undone.
Hence does he to the youthful pair propose
The burden of that enterprize upon
Himself to take: Orrilo will he slay,
If the two brethren nought the intent gainsay.

LXXXI.

But willingly to him these yield the emprize,
Assured his toil will be bestowed in vain;
And now a new Aurora climbs the skies,
And from his walls Orrilo on the plain
Drops,—and the strife begins—Orrilo plies
The mace, the duke the sword; he 'mid a rain
Of strokes would from the body at one blow
Divorce the spirit of the enchanted foe:

LXXXII.

Together with the mace he lops the fist;
And now this arm, now the other falls to ground;
Sometimes he cleaves the corslet's iron twist,
And piecemeal shears and maims the felon round.
Orrilo re-unites the portions missed,
Found on the champagne, and again is sound:
And, though into a hundred fragments hewed,
Astolpho sees him, in a thought, renewed.

LXXXIII.

After a thousand blows, Astolpho sped
One stroke, above the shoulders and below
The chin, which lopt away both helm and head:
Nor lights the duke less swiftly than his foe.
Then grasps the hair defiled with gore and red,
Springs in a moment on his horse, and lo!
Up-stream with it along Nile's margin hies,
So that the thief cannot retake the prize.

LXXXIV.

That fool, who had not marked the warrior's feat,
Was searching in the dust to find his head;
But when he heard the charger in retreat,
Who through the forest with the plunder fled,
Leapt quickly into his own courser's seat,
And in pursuit of bold Astolpho sped.
Fain had Orrilo shouted "Hola! stay!"
But that the duke had borne his mouth away:

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LXXXV.

Yet pleased Astolpho had not in like guise
Borne off his heels, pursues with flowing rein.
Him Rabican, who marvellously flies,
Distances by a mighty length of plain.
This while the wizard's head Astolpho eyes
From poll to front, above the eyebrows twain,
Searching, in haste, if he the hair can see
Which makes Orrilo's immortality.

LXXXVI.

Amid innumerable locks, no hair
Straiter or crisper than the rest was seen.
How then should good Astolpho, in his care
To slay the thief, so many choose between?
"To cut them all (he said) it better were."
And since he scissors lacked and razor keen,
He wanting these, resorted to his glaive,
Which cut so well, it might be said to shave;

LXXXVII.

And, holding, by the nose, the severed head,
Close-sheared it all, behind and eke before.
He found, among the rest, the fatal thread.
Then pale became the visage, changing sore,
Turned up its eyes, and signals sore and dread
Of the last agony of nature wore;
And the headless body seated in the sell,
Shuddered its last, and from the courser fell.

LXXXVIII.

The duke returns where he the champions two
And dames had left, the trophy in his hand,
Which manifests of death the tokens true;
And shows the distant body on the sand.
I know not if they this with pleasure view,
Though him they welcome with demeanour bland:
For the intercepted victory might pain
Perchance inflict upon the envying twain.

LXXXIX.

Nor do I think that either gentle fay
With pleasure could that battle's issue see:
Since those kind dames, because they would delay
The doleful fate which shortly was to be
In France the brethren's lot, had in that fray
With fierce Orrilo matched the warriors free;
And so to occupy the pair had cast,
Till the sad influence of the skies were past.

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XC.

When to the castellan was certified
In Damietta, that the thief was dead,
He loosed a carrier-pigeon, having tied
Beneath her wing a letter by a thread.
She went to Cairo; and, to scatter wide
The news, another from that town was sped
(Such is the usage there); so, Egypt through,
In a few hours, the joyful tidings flew.

XCI.

As he had brought the adventure to an end,
The duke now sought the noble youths to stir,
(Though of themselves that way their wishes tend,
Nor they to whet that purpose need the spur)
That they the Church from outrage to defend,
And rights of Charles, the Roman Emperor,
Would cease to war upon that Eastern strand,
And would seek honour in their native land.

XCII.

Gryphon and Aquilant thus bid adieu,
One and the other, to his lady fair;
Who, though it sorely troubled them, ill knew
How to resist the wishes of the pair.
The duke, together with the warlike two,
Turns to the right, resolved to worship, where
God erst incarnate dwelt, the holy places,
Ere he to cherished France his way retraces.

XCIII.

The warriors to the left-hand might incline,
As plainer and more full of pleasant cheer,
Where still along the sea extends their line;
But take the right-hand path, abrupt and drear;
Since the chief city of all Palestine,
By six days' journey, is, through this, more near.
Water there is along this rugged track,
And grass; all other needful matters lack.

XCIV.

So that, before they enter on their road,
All that is needful they collect, and lay
Upon the giant's back the bulky load,
Who could a tower upon his neck convey.
The Holy Land a mountain-summit showed,
At finishing their rough and salvage way;
Where HEAVENLY LOVE a willing offering stood,
And washed away our errors with his blood.

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XCV.

They, at the entrance of the city, view
A gentle stripling; and in him the three
Agnize Sir Sansonet of Mecca, who
Was, in youth's flower, for sovereign chivalry,
For sovereign goodness, famed the country through,
And wise beyond his years: from paganry
Converted by Orlando to the truth,
Who had, with his own hands, baptized the youth.

XCVI.

Designing there a fortilage, in front
Of Egypt's caliph they the warrior found;
And with a wall two miles in length, the mount
Of Calvary intending to surround.
Received with such a countenance, as is wont
To be of inward love the surest ground,
Them he conducted to his royal home,
And, with all comfort, harboured in the dome.

XCVII.

As deputy, the sainted land he swayed,
Conferred on him by Charlemagne, in trust.
To him the English duke a present made
Of that so sturdy and unmeasured beast,
That it ten draught-horse burdens had conveyed;
So monstrous was the giant and robust.
Astolpho gave the giant, and next gave
The net, in which he took the unwieldy slave.

XCVIII.

In quittance, Sansonet, his sword to bear,
Gave a rich girdle to Astolpho bold,
And spurs for either heel, a costly pair,
With buckles and with rowels made of gold;
Which ('twas believed) the warrior's relics were,
Who freed the damsel from that dragon old;
Spoils, which Sir Sansonet, with many more,
From Joppa, when he took the city, bore.

XCIX.

Cleansed of their errors in a monastery,
From whence the odour of good works upwent,
They of Christ's passion every mystery
Contemplating, through all the churches went;
Which now, to our eternal infamy,
Foul Moors usurp: what time on strife intent,
All Europe rings with arms and martial deeds,
And war is everywhere but where it needs.

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C.

While grace the warlike three devoutly sought,
Intent on pardon and on pious lore,
A Grecian pilgrim, known to Gryphon, brought
Tidings, which ill the afflicted champion bore,
From his long-cherished vow and former thought,
Too foreign, too remote; and these so sore
Inflamed his troubled breast, and bred such care,
They wholly turned aside his mind from prayer.

CI.

For his misfortune, one of lovely feature
Sir Gryphon worshipped, Origilla hight.
Of fairer visage and of better stature,
Not one among a thousand meets the sight:
But faithless, and of such an evil nature,
That thou mightst town and city search outright,
And continent and island, far and near,
Yet never, as I think, wouldst find her peer.

CII.

In Constantine's imperial city, burned
With a fierce fever, he had left the fair;
And hoped to find her, to that place returned,
Lovelier than ever; and enjoy her there.
But she to Antioch (as the warrior learned)
Had with another leman made repair;
Thinking, while such fresh youth was yet her own,
'Twere not a thing to brook—to sleep alone.

CIII.

Sir Gryphon, from the time he heard the news,
Had evermore bemoaned him, day or night:
Whatever pleasure other wight pursues
Seems but the more to vex his troubled sprite.
Let each reflect, who to his mischief woos,
How keenly tempered are Love's darts of might
And, heavier than all ills, the torment fell,
In that he was ashamed his grief to tell.

CIV.

This; for that Aquilant had oft before
Reproved him for the passion which he nursed,
And sought to banish her from his heart's core;
—Her, who of all bad women is the worst,
He still had censured, in his wiser lore.
If by his brother Aquilant accurst,
Her Gryphon, in his partial love, excuses,
For mostly self-conceit our sense abuses.

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CV.

It therefore is his purpose, without say
To Aquilant, alone to take the quest
As far as Antioch, and bear her away,
Who had borne off his heart-core from his breast:
To find him, who had made the dame his prey,
And take such vengeance of him, ere he rest,
As shall for aye be told. My next will tell
How he effected this, and what befell.

CANTO XVI.

ARGUMENT.

Gryphon finds traitorous Origilla nigh
Damascus city, with Martano vile.
Slaughtered the Saracens and Christians lie
By thousands and by thousands heaped this while;
And if the Moors outside of Paris die,
Within the Sarzan so destroys each pile,
Such slaughter deals, that greater ill than this
Never before has been exprest I wiss.

I.

Love's penalties are manifold and dread:
Of which I have endured the greater part,
And, to my cost, in these so well am read,
That I can speak of them as 'twere my art.
Hence if I say, or if I ever said,
(Did speech or living page my thoughts impart)
'One ill is grievous and another light,'
Yield me belief, and deem my judgment right.

II.

I say, I said, and, while I live, will say,
'He, who is fettered by a worthy chain,
'Though his desire his lady should gainsay,
'And, every way averse, his suit disdain;
'Though Love deprive him of all promised pay,
'After long time and trouble spent in vain,
'He, if his heart be placed well-worthily,
'Needs not lament though he should waste and die.'

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III.

Let him lament, who plays a slavish part,
Whom two bright eyes and lovely tresses please;
Beneath which beauties lurks a wanton heart
With little that is pure, and much of lees.
The wretch would fly; but bears in him a dart,
Like wounded stag, whichever way he flees;
Dares not confess, yet cannot quench, his flame,
And of himself and worthless love has shame.

IV.

The youthful Gryphon finds him in this case,
Who sees the error which he cannot right;
He sees how vilely he his heart does place
On faithless Origille, his vain delight:
Yet evil use doth sovereign reason chase,
And free-will is subdued by appetite.
Though a foul mind the lady's actions speak,
Her, wheresoe'er she is, must Gryphon seek.

V.

Resuming the fair history, I say,
Out of the city he in secret rode;
Nor to his brother would his plan bewray,
Who oft on him had vain reproof bestowed:
But to the left t'wards Ramah shaped his way,
By the most level and most easy road.
Him six days' journey to Damascus brought,
Whence, setting out anew, he Antioch sought.

VI.

He nigh Damascus met the lover, who
Perfidious Origilla's heart possest,
And matched in evil customs were the two,
Like stalk and flower: for that in either's breast
Was lodged a fickle heart; the dame untrue,
And he a traitor whom she loved the best.
While both the lovers hid their nature base,
To others' cost, beneath a courteous face,

VII.

As I relate to you, the cavalier
Came on huge courser, trapped with mickle pride;
With faithless Origille, in gorgeous gear,
With gold embroidered, and with azure dyed.
Two ready knaves, who serve the warrior, rear
The knightly helm and buckler at his side;
As one who with fair pomp and semblance went
Towards Damascus, to a tournament.

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VIII.

Damascus' king a splendid festival
Had in these days bid solemnly proclaim;
And with what pomp they could, upon his call,
Thither, in shining arms, the champions came.
At Gryphon's sight the harlot's spirits fall,
Who fears that he will work her scathe and shame;
And knows her lover has not force and breath
To save her from Sir Gryphon, threatening death:

IX.

But like most cunning and audacious quean,
Although she quakes from head to foot with fear,
Her voice so strengthens, and so shapes her mien,
That in her face no signs of dread appear.
Having already made her leman ween
The trick devised, she feigns a joyous cheer,
Towards Sir Gryphon goes, and for long space
Hangs on his neck, fast-locked in her embrace.

X.

She, after suiting with much suavity
The action to the word, sore-weeping, cried:
"Dear lord, is this the guerdon due to me,
"For love and worship? that I should abide
"Alone, one live-long year, deprived of thee,
"—A second near—and yet upon thy side
"No grief?—and had I borne for thee to stay,
"I know not if I should have seen that day.

XI.

"When I from Nicosià thee expected
"(When thou wast journeying to the plenar court)[1]
"To cheer me,—left with fever sore infected,
"And in the dread of death,—I heard report
"That thou wast gone to Syria; and dejected
"By that ill tiding, suffered in such sort,
"I, all unable to pursue thy quest,
"Had nigh with this right-hand transfixt my breast.

XII.

"But Fortune, by her double bounty, shows
"She guards me more than thou: me to convey
"She sent my brother here, who with me goes,
"My honour safe in his protecting stay;
"And this encounter with thee now bestows,
"Which I above all other blessings weigh,
"And in good time; for hadst thou longer stayed,
"My lord, I should have died of hope delayed."

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XIII.

The wicked woman, full of subtlety
(Worse than a fox in crafty hardihood)
Pursues, and so well shapes her history,
She wholly throws the blame on Gryphon good;
Makes him believe that other not to be
Her kin alone, but of her flesh and blood,
Got by one father;—and so puts upon
The knight, that he less credits Luke and John.

XIV.

Nor he the fraud of her, more false than fair,
Only forbore with just reproach to pay;
Nor only did the threatened stranger spare,
Who was the lover of that lady gay;
But deemed to excuse himself sufficient were,
Turning some portion of the blame away;
And as the real brother she profest,
Unceasingly the lady's knight carest;

XV.

And to Damascus, with the cavalier
Returned, who to Sir Gryphon made report,
'That Syria's wealthy king, with sumptuous cheer,
'Within that place would hold a splendid court;
'And who, baptized or infidel, appear
'There at his tourney (of whatever sort),
'Within the city and without, assures
'From wrong, for all the time the feast endures.'

XVI.

Yet I of Origilla's treachery
Shall not so steadfastly pursue the lore,
Who, famed not for one single perfidy,
Thousands and thousands had betrayed before,
But that I will return again to see
Two hundred thousand wretched men or more
Burnt by the raging wild-fire, where they spread,
About the walls of Paris, scathe and dread.

XVII.

I left you where king Agramant prepared
To storm a gate, and to the assault was gone:
This he had hoped to find without a guard;
And work elsewhere to bar the way was none.
For there, in person, Charles kept watch and ward
With many, practised warriors every one;
Two Angelines, two Guidos, Angelier,
Avino, Avolio, Otho, and Berlinghier.

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XVIII.

One and the other host its worth, before
Charles and king Agramant, desire to show,
Where praise, where riches are, they think, in store
For those that do their duty on the foe.
But such were not the achievements of the Moor
As to repair the loss; for, to his woe,
Full many a Saracen the champaign prest;
Whose folly was a beacon to the rest.

XIX.

The frequent darts a storm of hail appear,
Which from the city-wall the Christians fling;
The deafening clamours put the heavens in fear,
Which from our part, and from that other, ring.
But Charles and Agramant must wait; for here
I of the Mars of Africa will sing,
King Rodomont, that fierce and fearful man,
That through the middle of the city ran.

XX.

I know not, sir, if you the adventure dread
Of that so daring Moor to mind recall,
The leader, who had left his people dead,
Between the second work and outer wall;
Upon whose limbs the ravening fire so fed,
Was never sight more sad!—I told withal,
How vaulting o'er that hindrance at a bound,
He cleared the moat which girt the city round.

XXI.

When he was known the thickening crowd among,
By the strange arms he wore and scaly hide,
There, where the aged sires and feebler throng,
Listened to each new tale on every side;
Heaven-high groan, moan, and lamentation rung,
And loud they beat their lifted palms and cried:
While those who had the strength to fly aloof,
Sought safety not from house or temple's roof.

XXII.

But this the cruel sword concedes to few,
So brandished by that Saracen robust;
And here, with half a leg dissevered, flew
A foot, there head divided from the bust:
This cleft across, and that behold him hew,
From head to hips, so strong the blow and just.
While, of the thousands wounded by the Moor,
Is none that shows an honest scar before.

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XXIII.

What by weak herd, in fields of Hircany,
The tiger does, or Indian Ganges near,
Or wolf, by lamb or kid, on heights which lie
On Typheus' back, the cruel cavalier[2]
Now executes on those, I will not, I
Call phalanxes or squadrons, but a mere
Rabble, that I should term a race forlorn,
Who but deserved to die ere they were born.

XXIV.

Of all he cuts, and thrusts, and maims, and bleeds,
There is not one who looks him in the face.
Throughout that street, which in a straight line leads
Up to St. Michael's bridge, so thronged a space,
Rodomont, terrible and fearful, speeds,
Whirling his bloody brand, nor grants he grace,
In his career, to servant or to lord;
And saint and sinner feel alike the sword.

XXV.

Religion cannot for the priest bespeak
Mercy, nor innocence avail the child:
Nor gently beaming eyes, nor vermeil cheek,
Protect the blooming dame or damsel mild.
Age smites its breast and flies: while bent to wreak
Vengeance, the Saracen, with gore defiled,
Shows not his valour more than cruel rage,
Heedless alike of order, sex, and age.

XXVI.

Nor the impious king alone with human blood,
—Lord of the impious he—his hand distains,
But even on walls so sorely vents his mood,
He fires fair houses, and polluted fanes.
The houses almost all were made of wood
Then (as 'tis told), and this, by what remains,
May be believed; for yet in Paris we
Six out of ten no better builded see.

XXVII.

Though flames demolish all things far and wide,
This ill appears his furious hate to slake:
Where'er the paynim has his hands applied,
He tumbles down a roof at every shake.
My lord, believe, you never yet espied
Bombard in Padua, of so large a make,
That it could rend from wall of battered town,
What, at a single pull, the king, plucked down.

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XXVIII.

While the accursed man, amid the rout,
So warred with fire and sword, if at his post,
King Agramant had prest it from without,
The ample city had that day been lost.
But he was hindered by the warrior stout,
Who came from England with the advancing host,
Composed of English and of Scotch allied,
With Silence and the Angel for their guide.

XXIX.

It was God's will, that while through town and tower
The furious Rodomont such ruin spread,
Thither arrived Rinaldo, Clermont's flower,
Three leagues above, he o'er the river's bed
Had cast a bridge; from whence his English power
To the left-hand by crooked ways he led;
That, meaning to assail the barbarous foes,
The stream no obstacle might interpose.

XXX.

Rinaldo had, with Edward, sent a force,
Six thousand strong, of archer-infantry,
And sped, with Ariman, two thousand horse
Of lightest sort; and foot and cavalry
Sought Paris by those roads, which have their course
Directly to, and from, the Picard sea;
That by St. Martin's and St. Denys' gate,
They might convey the aid the burghers wait.

XXXI.

Rinaldo sent with these the baggage-train
And carriages, with which his troops were stored;
And fetching, with the forces that remain,
A compass, he the upper way explored.
He bridge, and boat, and means to pass the Seine,
Had with him; for it here was ill to ford.
He past his army, broke the bridges down,
And rank'd in line the bands of either crown.*

XXXII.

But having first the peers and captains wheeled
About him in a ring, the cavalier
Mounted the bank which overtopt the field,
So much, that all might plainly see and hear;
And cried, "My lords, you should thanksgiving yield,
"With lifted hands, to God who brought you here;
"Through whom, o'er every nation, you may gain
"Eternal glory, bought with little pain.

* Scotch and English.

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XXXIII.

"Two princes, by your means, will rescued be,
"If you relieve those city gates from siege;
"Him, your own king, whom you from slavery
"And death to save, a subject's vows oblige;
"And a famed emperor, of more majesty
"Than ever yet in court was served by liege,
"And with them other kings, and dukes, and peers,
"And lords of other lands, and cavaliers.

XXXIV.

"So that one city saving, not alone
"Will the Parisians bless your helping hand,
"Who, sadder than for sorrows of their own,
"Timid, afflicted, and disheartened stand;
"And their unhappy wives and children moan,
"Which share in the same peril, and the band
"Of virgins, dedicate to heavenly spouse,
"Lest this day frustrate see their holy vows;

XXXV.

—"I say, this city saved from deadly wound,
"Not only will Parisians hold you dear;
"But habitants of all the countries round:
"Nor speak I only of the nations near;
"For city there is none on Christian ground,
"But what has citizens beleaguered here;
"So that to you, for vanquishing the foe,
"More lands than France will obligation owe.

XXXVI.

"If him the ancients with a crown endued,
"Who saved one citizen by worthy deed,
"For rescuing such a countless multitude,
"What recompense shall be your worthy meed?
"But if, from jealousy or sloth, so good
"And holy, enterprise should ill succeed,
"Believe me, only while these walls endure,
"Is Italy or Almayn's realm secure;

XXXVII.

"Or any other part, where men adore
"Him, who for us upon the cross was hung;
"Nor think that distance saves you from the Moor,
"Nor deem your island strong, the waves among.
"For if, from far Gibraltar's straits of yore,
"And old Alcides' pillars, sailed the throng,
"To bear off plunder from your sea-girt strands,
"What will they do when they possess our lands?[3]

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XXXVIII.

"And, if in this fair enterprise arrayed,
"No gain, no glory served you as a guide,
"A common debt enjoins you mutual aid,
"Militant here upon one Church's side.
"Moreover, let not any be afraid,
"Our broken foemen will the assault abide;
"Who seem to me ill-taught in warlike art,
"A feeble rabble without arms or heart."

XXXIX.

Such reasons, and yet better for, that need
Might good Rinaldo in his speech infer;
And with quick phrase and voice, to valiant deed
The high-minded barons and bold army stir;
And this was but to goad a willing steed
(As the old proverb says) who lacks no spur.
He moved the squadrons, having closed his speech,
Softly, beneath their separate banners, each.

XL.

He, without clamour, without any noise,
So moves his triple host, their flags below.
Zerbino, marching by the stream, enjoys
The honour first to assail the barbarous foe;
The paladin the Irishmen employs
More inland, with a wider wheel to go.
Thus England's horse and foot, the two between,
Led by the Duke of Lancaster, are seen.

XLI.

The paladin rode on, along the shore,
When he had put the warriors in their way,
And, passing by their squadrons, pricked before
Valiant Zerbino and his whole array,
Until he reached the quarters of the Moor,
Where Oran's king, and king Sobrino lay;
Who, half-a-mile removed from those of Spain,
Posted upon that side, observed the plain.

XLII.

With such a faithful escort fortified
And sure, the Christians who had thither wound,
With Silence and the Angel for their guide,
No longer could stand mute or keep their ground:
But hearing now the foe, with shouts defied
Their hosts, and made the shrilling trumpets sound;
And with loud clamours, which Heaven's concave fill,
Sent through the paynim's bones a deadly chill.

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XLIII.

Rinaldo spurs before the troops combined
His foaming courser, and his weapon rests;
And a full bow-shot leaves the Scots behind:
So all delay the impatient peer molests.
As oftentimes an eddying gust of wind
Issues, ere yet the horrid storm infests,
So sallying swiftly from the following herd,
Rinaldo forth upon Bayardo spurred.

XLIV.

At the aspect of the paladin of France,
The wavering Moorish files betray their fear;
And, trembling in their hands, is seen the lance,
Their thighs and stirrups quivering, like the spear.
King Pulian only marks the knight's advance,
Knowing Rinaldo not, unchanged in cheer;
Nor thinking such a cruel shock to meet,
Gallops against him on his courser fleet.

XLV.

He stoops upon the weapon which he strains
Whole and collected for the martial game:
Then to his horse abandoning the reins,
And goading with both spurs the courser, came.
Upon the other side no valour feigns,
But shows, by doings, what he is in name;
—With what rare grace and matchless art he wars,
The son of Aymon, rather son of Mars.

XLVI.

Well-matched in skill, they aimed their cruel blows,
With lances at each other's heads addrest;
Ill-matched, in arms and valour, were the foes,
For *this* past on, and *that* the champaigne prest.
More certain proof of worth, when warriors close,
There needs than knightly lance, well placed in rest;
But Fortune even more than Valour needs,
Which ill, without her saving succour, speeds.

XLVII.

With the good spear new-levelled in his fist,
At Oran's king behold Rinaldo dart.
Of bulk, and bone, and sinew, to resist
The monarch was, but ill supplied with heart.
And his might pass for a fair stroke in list,
Though planted in the buckler's nether part.
Let those excuse it who refuse to admire,
Since the good paladin could reach no higher.

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XLVIII.

Nor did the buckler so the weapon stay,
Though made of palm within, and steel without,
But that it pierced the paunch, and made a way
To let that mean and ill-matched spirit out.
The courser, who had deemed that all the day
He must so huge a burden bear about,
Thanked in his heart the warrior, who well met,
Had thus preserved him from so sore a sweat.

XLIX.

Rinaldo, having broke his rested spear,
So wheels his horse, he seems equipt with wings;
Who, turning swiftly with the cavalier,
Amid the closest crowd, impetuous springs.
Composed of brittle glass the arms appear
Where Sir Rinaldo red Fusberta swings.
Nor tempered steel is there, nor corslet thick,
Which keeps the sword from biting to the quick.

L.

Yet few the tempered plates or iron pins
With which encounters that descending brand;
But targets, some of oak and some of skins,
And quilted vest and turban's twisted band.
Lightly such drapery good Rinaldo thins,
And cleaves, and bores, and shears, on either hand;
Nor better from his sword escapes the swarm,
Than grass from sweeping scythe, or grain from storm.

LI.

The foremost squadron had been put to flight,
When thither the vanguard Zerbino led.
Forth pricking from the following crowd, in sight
Appeared, with levelled lance, their youthful head:
With no less fury those who trooped to fight
Beneath his banner, to the combat sped;
Like lions, like so many wolves, who leap
In fury to the assault of goat or sheep.

LII.

Both spurred their coursers on, with rested lance,
When either warrior to his foe was near;
And that short interval, that small expanse,
Of plain, between, was seen to disappear.
Was never witnessed yet a stranger dance!
For the Scots only ply the murderous spear;
Only the scattered paynims slaughtered lie,
As if conducted thither but to die.

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LIII.

It seemed as if each coward Paynim grew
More cold than ice; each Scot more fierce than flame.
The Moors believed that with Rinaldo's thew
And muscle fortified, each Christian came.
Sobrino quickly moved his ordered crew,
Nor stayed till herald should his call proclaim:
Better were they than those which went before,
For captain, armour, and for martial lore.

LIV.

Less worthless men of Africa were they,
Though ill had they been deemed of much avail.
Ill harnessed, and worse trained to martial fray,
Forthwith King Dardinel, the foe to assail,
Moved up his host, himself in helmet gay,
And sheathing all his limbs in plate and mail.
The fourth division I believe was best,
Which, under Isolier, to battle prest.

LV.

Thraso, this while, the valiant Duke of Mar,
Glad in the tumult, for the cavaliers
Who muster in his train, uplifts the bar,
And to the lists of fame his following cheers,
When Isolier, with horsemen of Navarre,
Entered in that fierce fray he sees and hears.
Next Ariodantes moved his chivalry,
Who was of late made Duke of Albany.

LVI.

The deep sonorous trumpet's bellowing,
And sound of drum, and barbarous instrument,
Combined with twang of bow, and whiz of sling,
Wheel and machine, and stone from engine sent,
And (what more loud than these appeared to ring)
Tumult, and shriek, and groan, and loud lament,
Composed a direr whole than what offends
The neighbouring tribes where deafening Nile descends.

LVII.

The arrows' double shower the ample sky
With wide-extended shade is seen to shroud;
Breath, smoke of sweat and dust ascend on high,
And seem to stamp in air a murky cloud.
By turns each host gives way, and you might spy,
Now chasing, now in flight, the self-same crowd;
And here some wight, beside his foeman slain,
Or little distant, prostrate on the plain.

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LVIII.

When, harassed with fatigue, a wearied crew
Withdraw, fresh files their fellows reinforce:
Men, here and there, the wasted ranks renew;
Here march supplies of foot, and there of horse:
Her mantle green for robe of crimson hue
Earth shifts, ensanguined where the warriors course:
And there where azure flowers and yellow sprung,
Now slaughtered men lie stretched their steeds among.

LIX.

Zerbino was more wonders seen to do
Than ever stripling of his age; he strowed
The ground with heaps of dead, and overthrew
The paynim numbers which about him flowed.
The valiant Ariodantes to his new-
Entrusted squadron mighty prowess showed;
Filling with dread and wonder, near and far,
The squadrons of Castile and of Navarre.

LX.

Chelindo and Mosco (bastards were the twain
Of Calabrun, late king of Arragon),
And one esteemed among the valiant train,
Calamidor, of Barcellona's town,
Leaving their standards, in the hope to gain,
By young Zerbino's death, a glorious crown,
Attacked the warrior with united force,
And wounded in his flanks the prince's horse.

LXI.

Pierced by three lances lay the courser strong,
But bold Zerbino quickly rose anew;
And, eager to avenge his charger's wrong,
The assailants, where he sees them, will pursue.
Zerbino at Mosco first, that overhung
Him, in the hope to make him prisoner, flew,
And pierced him in the flank; who from his sell,
Pallid and cold, upon the champaign fell.

LXII.

When him so killed, as 'twere by stealthy blow
Chelindo viewed, to avenge his brother slain,
He charged, intent the prince to overthrow;
But *he* seized fast his courser by the rein,
And, thence to rise not, laid the charger low,
Destined no more to feed on hay or grain;
For at one stroke, so matchless was his force,
Zerbino cleft the rider and his horse.

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LXIII.

When that fell blow Calamidor espied,
He turned the bridle short to speed away,
But him with downright cut Zerbino plied
Behind, and cried withal, "Stay, traitor, stay.
Nor from its aim the sword-stroke wandered wide,
Though from the mark it went somedeal astray;
The faulchion missed the rider as he fled,
But reached the horse's croup, and stretched him dead.

LXIV.

He quits the horse, and thence for safety crawls;
But he with little boot escapes his foe;
For him Duke Thraso's horse o'erturns and mauls,
Opprest the ponderous courser's weight below.
Where the huge crowd upon Zerbino falls,
Ariodantes and Lurcanio go;
And with them many a cavalier and count,
Who do their best Zerbino to remount.

LXV.

Then Artalìco and Margano knew
The force of Ariodantes' circling brand:
While Casimir and Enearco rue
More deeply yet the puissance of his hand.
Smote by the knight, escaped the former two;
The others were left dead upon the strand.
Lurcanio shows what are his force and breath;
Who charges, smites, o'erturns, and puts to death.

LXVI.

Sir, think not that more inland on the plain
The warfare is less mortal than along
The stream, nor that the troops behind remain
Which to the duke of Lancaster belong.
He valiantly assailed the flags of Spain,
And long in even scale the battle hung.
For Horse and Foot, and Captains of those bands,
On either side, could deftly ply their hands.

LXVII.

Forward Sir Oldrad pricks and Fieramont;
This Glocester's duke, and York's the other knight
With them conjoined is Richard, Warwick's count,
And the bold duke of Clarence, Henry hight.
These Follicon and Matalista front,
And Baricond, with all they lead to fight.
Almeria *this*, and *that* Granada guides,
And o'er Majorca Baricond presides.

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LXVIII.

Well matched awhile the Christian and the Moor
Appeared, without advantage in the fray.
Now *this*, now *that* gave ground, like corn before
The light and fickle breeze which blows in May:
Or as the sea which ripples on the shore,
Still comes and goes, nor keeps one certain way.
When hollow Fortune thus had sported long,
She proved disastrous to the paynim throng.

LXIX.

The duke of Glocester Matalista bold
Assailed this while, and hurtled from his sell;
Fieramont Follicon o'erturned and rolled,
In the right shoulder smit, on earth as well.
The advancing English either Paynim hold,
And bear their prisoners off to dungeon-cell.
This while, Sir Baricond is, in the strife,
By Clarence's bold duke deprived of life.

LXX.

Hence 'tis among the Moors amazement all,
While hence the Christians take such heart and pride,
The bands do nought but quit their ground and fall,
And break their order on the Paynim side,
What time the Christian troops come on, and gall
Their flying ranks, which nowhere will abide:
And had not one arrived to aid their host,
The Paynim camp had on that side been lost.

LXXI.

But Ferrau, who till this time ever nigh
Marsilius, scarce had quitted him that day,
When half destroyed he marked his chivalry,
And saw that baffled banner borne away,
Pricked his good courser forth, in time to spy,
(Where 'mid those squadrons hottest waxed the fray)
With his head severed by a griesly wound,
Olympio de la Serra fall to ground:

LXXII.

A stripling he, who such sweet music vented,
Accorded to the horned lyre's soft tone;
That at the dulcet melody relented
The hearer's heart, though harder than a stone.
Happy! if, with such excellence contented,
He had pursued so fair a fame alone,
And loathed shield, quiver, helmet, sword and lance;
Destined by these to die a youth in France.

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LXXIII.

When bold Ferrau beheld *his* cruel plight,
For whom he love and much esteem profest,
He felt more pity at the doleful sight
Than, 'mid those thousands slain, for all the rest.
And smote the foe who slew him with such might,
That he his helm divided from the crest;
Cut front, eyes, visage, and mid bosom through,
And cast him down amid the slaughtered crew.

LXXIV.

Nor stops he here, nor leaves a corslet whole,
Nor helm unbroken, where his sword is plied,
Of *this* the front or cheek, of *that* the poll,
The arm of other foe his strokes divide;
And he, of *these* divorcing body and soul,
Restores the wavering battle on that side;
Whence the disheartened and ignoble throng
Are scattered wide, and broke, and driven along.

LXXV.

Into the medley pricks King Agramant,
Desirous there his bloody course to run;
With him King Baliverzo, Farurant,
Soridan, Bambirago, Prusïon;
And next so many more of little vaunt,
Whose blood will form a lake ere day be done,
That I could count each leaf with greater ease,
When autumn of their mantle strips the trees.

LXXVI.

Agramant from the wall a numerous band
Of horse and foot withdraws, and sends the array
Beneath the king of Fez, with a command
Behind the Moorish tents to make his way,
And those of Ireland in their march withstand,
Whom he sees hurrying with what haste they may,
And with wide wheel and spacious compass wind,
To fall upon the Paynim camp behind.

LXXVII.

The king of Fez upon this service prest;
For all delay might sore his work impede.
This while King Agramant unites the rest,
And parts the troops who to the battle speed.
He sought himself the river, where he guessed
The Moorish host might most his presence need;
And, from that quarter, had a courier prayed,
By King Sobrino sent, the monarch's aid.

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LXXVIII.

He more than half his camp behind him led,
In one deep phalanx. At the mighty sound
Alone, the Scotsmen trembled, and in dread
Abandoned honour, order, and their ground:
Lurcanio, Ariodantes, and their head,
Zerbino, there alone the torrent bound;
And haply he, who was afoot, had died,
But that in time his need Rinaldo spied.

LXXIX.

Elsewhere the paladin was making fly
A hundred banners: while the cavalier
So chased the quailing Saracens, the cry
Of young Zerbino's peril smote his ear;
For, single and afoot, his chivalry
Amid the Africans had left the peer.
Rinaldo turned about and took his way
Where he beheld the Scots in disarray.

LXXX.

He plants his courser, where their squadrons yield
To the fierce Paynims, and exclaims; "Where go
"Your bands, and why so basely quit the field,
"Yielding so vilely to so vile a foe?
"Behold the promised trophies, spear and shield,
"Spoils which your loaded churches ought to show!
"What praise! what glory! that alone, and reft
"Of his good horse, your monarch's son is left!

LXXXI.

He from a squire receives a lance, and spies
King Prusion little distant, sovereign
Of the Alvaracchiæ, and against him hies;
Whom he unhorses, dead upon the plain.
So Agricalt, so Bambirago dies;
And next sore wounded is Sir Soridane;
Who had been slain as well amid the throng,
If good Rinaldo's lance had proved more strong.

LXXXII.

That weapon broken, he Fusberta rears,
And smites Sir Serpentine, him of the star.
Though charmed from mischief are the cavalier's
Good arms, he falls astounded by the jar,
And thus Rinaldo round Zerbino clears
The field so widely, where those champions war,
That without more dispute he takes a horse
Of those, who masterless, at random, course.

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LXXXIII.

That he in time remounted it was well,
Who haply would not, if he more delayed;
For Agramant at once, and Dardinel,
Sobrino, and Balastro thither made;
But he, who had in time regained the sell,
Wheeled, here and there his horse, with brandished blade,
Dispatching into hell the mixt array,
That how men live above their ghosts might say.

LXXXIV.

The good Rinaldo, who to overthrow
The strongest of the foemen covets still,
At Agramant directs a deadly blow,
—Who seems too passing-proud, and greater ill
Works there, than thousand others of the foe—
And spurs his horse, the Moorish chief to spill.
He smote the monarch, broadside charged the steed,
And man and horse reversed upon the mead.

LXXXV.

What time, without, in such destructive frays
Hate, Rage, and Fury, all offend by turns,
In Paris Rodomont the people slays,
And costly house, and holy temple burns:
While Charles elsewhere another duty stays,
Who nothing hears of this, nor aught discerns.
He, in the town, receives the British band,
Which Edward and Sir Ariman command.

LXXXVI.

To him a squire approached, who pale with dread,
Scarce drew his breath, and cried; "Oh, well away!
"Alas! alas!" (and thus he often said,
Ere he could utter aught beside) "To-day,
"To-day, sire, is the Roman empire sped,
"And Christ to the heathen makes his flock a prey.
"A fiend from air to-day has dropt, that none
"Henceforth may in this city make their won.

LXXXVII.

"Satan (in sooth, it can no other be)
"Destroys and ruins the unhappy town.
"Turn, and the curling wreaths of vapour see,
"From the red flames which wander up and down
"List to those groans, and be they warrantry
"Of the sad news thy servant now makes known!
"*One* the fair city wastes with sword and fire,
"Before whose vengeful fury all retire."

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LXXXVIII.

Even such as he, who hears the tumult wide,
And clatter of church-bells, ere he espy
The raging fire, concealed from none beside
Himself, to him most dangerous, and most nigh;
Such was King Charles; who heard, and then descried
The new disaster with his very eye.
Hence he the choicest of his meiny steers
Thither, where he the cry and tumult hears.

LXXXIX.

With many peers and chiefs, who worthiest are,
Summoned about him, Charlemagne is gone:
He bids direct his standards to the square
Whither the Paynim had repaired; hears groan
And tumult, spies the horrid tokens there
Of cruelty, sees human members strown.
—No more—Let him return another time,
Who willingly will listen to this rhyme.

CANTO XVII.

ARGUMENT.

Charles goes, with his, against King Rodomont.
Gryphon in Norandini's tournament
Does mighty deeds; Martano turns his front,
Showing how recreant is his natural bent;
And next, on Gryphon to bring down affront,
Stole from the knight the arms in which he went;
Hence by the kindly monarch much esteemed,
And Gryphon scorned, whom he Martano deemed.

I.

God, outraged by our rank iniquity,
Whenever crimes have past remission's bound,
That mercy may with justice mingled be,
Has monstrous and destructive tyrants crowned;
And gifted them with force and subtlety,
A sinful world to punish and confound.
Marius and Sylla to this end were nursed,
Rome with two Neros and a Caius* cursed;

* Caius Caligula.

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II.

Domitian and the latter Antonine;
And, lifted from the lowest rabble's lees,
To imperial place and puissance, Maximine:
Hence Thebes to cruel Creon bent her knees,
Mezentius ruled the subject Agiline,
Fattening his fields with blood. To pests like these
Our Italy was given in later day,
To Lombard, Goth, and Hun a bleeding prey.

III.

What shall I of fierce Attila, what say
Of wicked Ezzeline, and hundreds more?
Whom, because men still trod the crooked way,
God sent them for their pain and torment sore.
Of this ourselves have made a clear assay,
As well as those who lived in days of yore;
Consigned to ravening wolves, ordained to keep
Us, his ill-nurtured and unuseful sheep;

IV.

Who, as if having more than served to fill
Their hungry maw, invite from foreign wood
Beyond the mountain, wolves of greedier will,
With them to be partakers of their food.
The bones which Thrasymene and Trebbia fill,
And Cannæ, seem but few to what are strewed
On fattened field and bank, where on their way
Adda and Mella, Ronco and Tarro stray.

V.

Now God permits that we should feel the spite
Of people, who are haply worse than we,
For errors multiplied and infinite,
And foul and pestilent iniquity.
The time will come we may such ill requite
Upon their shores, if we shall better be,
And their transgressions ever prove above
The long endurance of ETERNAL LOVE.

VI.

The Christian people then God's placid front
Must have disturbed with their excesses sore;
Since them with slaughter, rape, and rapine hunt,
Through all their quarters, plundering Turk and Moor:
But the unsparing rage of Rodomont
Proves worse than all the ills endured before.
I said that Charlemague had made repair
In search of him towards the city square.

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VII.

Charles, by the way, his people's butchery
Beholds—burnt palaces and ruined fanes—
And sees large portion of the city lie
In unexampled wreck.—"Ye coward trains,
"Whither in heartless panic would ye fly?
"Will none his loss contemplate? what remains
"To you,—what place of refuge, say, is left,
"If this from you so shamefully be reft?

VIII.

"Then shall one man alone, a prisoned foe,
"Who cannot scale the walls which round him spread,
"Unscathed, unquestioned, from your city go,
"When all are by his vengeful arm laid dead?"
Thus Charlemagne, whose veins with anger glow,
And shame, too strong to brook, in fury said;
And to the spacious square made good his way,
Where he beheld the foe his people slay.

IX.

Thither large portion of the populace,
Climbing the palace roof, had made resort;
For strongly walled, and furnished was the place
With ammunition, for their long support.
Rodomont, mad with pride, had in his chase
Of the scared burghers, singly cleared the court;
He with one daring hand, which scorned the world,
Brandished the sword;—his other wildfire hurled;

X.

And smote and thundered, 'mid a fearful shower,
At the sublime and royal house's gate.
To their life's peril, crumbling roof and tower
Is tost by them that on the summit wait:
Nor any fears to ruin hall or bower;
But wood and stone endure one common fate,
And marble column, slab, and gilded beam,
By sire and grandsire held in high esteem.[1]

XI.

Rodomont stands before the portal, bright
With steel, his head and bust secured in mail,
Like to a serpent,[2] issued into light,
Having cast off his slough, diseased and stale:
Who more than ever joying in his might,
Renewed in youth, and proud of polished scale,
Darts his three tongues, fire flashing from his eyes;
While every frighted beast before him flies.

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XII.

Nor bulwark, stone, nor arbalest, nor bow,
Nor what upon the paynim smote beside,
Sufficed to arrest the sanguinary foe;
Who broke and hewed, and shook that portal wide,
And in his fury let such day-light through,
'Twas easy to espy—and might be spied—
In visages o'ercast in death-like sort,
That full of people was the palace court.

XIII.

Through those fair chambers echoed shouts of dread,
And feminine lament from dame distrest;
And grieving, through the house, pale women fled,
Who wept, afflicted sore, and beat their breast.
And hugged the door-post and the genial bed,[3]
Too soon to be by stranger lords possest.
The matter in this state of peril hung
When thither came the king, his peers among.

XIV.

Charles turned him round to these, of vigorous hand,
Whom he had found in former peril true.
"Are you not those that erst with me did stand
"'Gainst Agolant in Aspramont? In you
"Is vigour now so spent, (he said) the band,
"Who *him*, Troyano, and Almontes slew,[4]
"With hundreds more, that you now fear to face
"One of that very blood, that very race?

XV.

"Why should I now in contest with the foe
"Less strength in you behold than then? Your might
"Upon this hound (pursued the monarch) show;
"This hound who preys on man.—A generous sprite
"The thought of death—approach he fast or slow—
"So that he dies but well, holds cheap and light.
"But where you are, I doubt my fortune ill,
"For by your succour have I conquered still."

XVI.

This said, he spurred his courser, couched his spear,
And charged the paynim; nor of life less free,
Sir Ogier joined the king in his career;
Namus and Oliver; and, with the three,
Avino, Avolio, Otho, and Berlinghier;
(For one without the rest I never see)
And on the bosom, flanks, and on the front,
All smote together at King Rodomont.

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XVII.

But let us, sir, for love of Heaven, forego
Of anger and of death the noisome lore;
And be it deemed that I have said enow,
For this while, of that Saracen, not more
Cruel than strong; 'tis time in trace to go
Of Gryphon, left with Origille, before
Damascus' gate, and him who with her came,
The adulterer, not the brother of the dame.

XVIII.

Of all the cities under eastern skies,
Most wealthy, populous, and fairly dight,
'Tis said, Damascus is; which distant lies
From Salem seven days' journey; its fair site,
A fertile plain, abundant fruits supplies,
Winter and summer, sojourn of delight.
Shading the city from the dawning day,
A mountain intercepts its early ray.

XIX.

Two crystal streams the wealthy city scower;
Whose currents, parted into many a rill,
Infinite gardens, never bare of flower,
Or stript of leaf, with grateful murmur fill:
'Tis said the perfumed waters are of power
(So plenteously they swell) to turn a mill;
And that whoever wander through the streets,
Scent, issuing from each house, a cloud of sweets.

XX.

Then the high-street gay signs of triumph wore,
Covered with showy cloths of different dye,
Which deck the walls, while sylvan leaves in store,
And scented herbs upon the pavement lie.[5]
Adorned is every window, every door,
With carpeting and finest drapery;
But more with ladies fair, and richly drest,
In costly jewels and in gorgeous vest.

XXI.

Within the city-gates in frolic sport,
Many are seen to ply the festive dance;
And here the burghers of the better sort
Upon their gay and well-trapt coursers prance.
A fairer show remains; the sumptuous court
Of barons bold and vassals, who advance,
Garnished with what could be procured, of ore
And pearl, from Ind and Erythræan shore.

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XXII.

Forward Sir Gryphon pricked, with his array,
Surveying, here and there, the whole at ease;
When them a knight arrested by the way,
And (such his wont and natural courtesies)
Obliged beneath his palace-roof to stay;
Where he let nought be wanting which might please;
And cheerfully the guests, with bath restored,
Next welcomed at his costly supper-board;

XXIII.

And told "how he, who Norandino hight,
"Damascus and all Syria's kingdom swayed,
"Native and foreigner had bade invite,
"On whom the sword of knighthood had been laid,
"To a fair joust, which at the morrow's light,
"Ensuing, in the square was to be made.
"Where they might show, and without further faring,
"If they had valour equal to their bearing."

XXIV.

Gryphon, though he came not that joust to see,
Accepts the challenge of the cavalier;
For when occasion serves, it cannot be
An evil use to make our worth appear:
Then questioned more of that solemnity;
—'If 'twere a wonted feast, held every year,
'Or new emprise; by which, in martial course,
'The monarch would assay his warriors' force.'—

XXV.

"The gorgeous feast our monarch will display
"Each fourth succeeding moon," the baron said;
"This is the first that you will now survey;
"None have been held beside. The cause which bred
"The solemn usage is, that on such day
"The king from sovereign peril saved his head,
"After four months, consumed in doleful wise,
"'Mid tears and groans, with death before his eyes.

XXVI.

"Our monarch, who is named king Norandine
"(Fully to you the matter to recite),
"Through many and many a year for her did pine,
"Above all other damsels fair and bright,
"The king of Cyprus' daughter; whom, in fine,
"Espoused, he, with his bride, and dame, and knight,
"To wait upon her home, a fair array,
"Towards his Syrian realm had shaped his way.

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XXVII.

"But as we scoured the fell Carpathian sea,[6]
"With flowing sheet, at distance from the shore,
"A storm assailed us, of such cruelty,
"The tempest even scared our pilot hoar.
"Drifting three days and nights at random we
"Our devious course 'mid threatening waves explore;
"Then, wet and weary, land 'mid verdant hills,
"Between well-shaded and refreshing rills.

XXVIII.

"We our pavilions pitch, and, 'mid those groves,
"Joyfully strain our awnings overhead;
"And kitchens there construct, and rustic stoves,
"And carpets for the intended banquet spread.
"Meanwhile through neighbouring vale the monarch roves,
"And secret wood, scarce pervious to the tread,
"Seeking red deer, goat, fallow-buck, and doe;
"And, following him, two servants bear his bow.

XXIX.

"While, with much solace, seated in a round,
"We from the chase expect our lord's return,
"Approaching us along the shore, astound,
"The orc, that fearful monster, we discern.
"God grant, fair sir, he never may confound
"Your eyesight with his semblance foul and stern!
"Better it is of him by fame to hear,
"Than to behold him by approaching near.

XXX.

"To calculate the grisly monster's height,
"(So measureless is he) exceeds all skill;
"Of fungus-hue, in place of orbs of sight,
"Their sockets two small bones like berries fill.[7]
"Towards us, as I say, he speeds outright
"Along the shore, and seems a moving hill.
"Tusks jutting out like savage swine he shows,
"A breast with drivel foul, and pointed nose.

XXXI.

"Running, the monster comes, and bears his snout
"In guise of brach, who enters on the trail.
"We who behold him fly (a helpless rout),
"Wherever terror drives, with visage pale.
"'Tis little comfort, that he is without
"Eyesight, who winds his plunder in the gale,
"Better than aught possest of scent and sight:
"And wing and plume were needed for our flight.

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XXXII.

" Some here, some there make off, but little gain
" By flying him; for swifter is the pest
" Than the south wind. Of forty, ten, with pain,
" Swimming aboard the bark in safety rest.
" Under his arm some wretches of our train
" He packed, nor empty left his lap or breast:
" And loaded a capacious scrip beside,
" Which, like a shepherd's, to his waist was tied.

XXXIII.

" Us to his den the sightless monster carried,
" Hollowed within a rock, upon the shore;
" Of snowy marble was that cavern quarried,
" As white as leaf, unstained by inky score.
" With him within the cave a matron tarried,
" Who marked by grief and pain a visage wore.
" With her were wife and maid, a numerous court,
" Both fair and foul, of every age and sort.

XXXIV.

" Large as the other, and that grotto near,
" Almost upon the summit of the rock,
" Another cavern was contrived, to rear,
" And from the weather fend his woolly flock,
" Which he still herded through the changeful year;
" So numerous, it were hard to count his stock:
" Wont in due season these to pen or loose,
" And play the shepherd more for sport than use.

XXXV.

" The flesh of man he savoured more than sheep,
" And this, before he reached the cave, was seen.
" Three youths of ours, ere yet he climbed the steep,
" He ate alive, or rather swallowed clean;
" Then moved the stone, which closed that cavern deep,
" And lodged us there. With that, to pasture green
" His flock he led, as wont, the meads among,
" Sounding the pipe which at his neck was hung

XXXVI.

" Our lord, meanwhile, returning to the strand,
" The loss which he had suffered comprehends;
" For in deep silence, upon every hand,
" Through empty tent and hut the monarch wends:
" Nor who has robbed him can he understand;
" And full of terror to the beach descends;
" Whence he his sailors in the offing sees
" Unmoor and spread their canvas to the breeze.

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XXXVII.

" As soon as Norandino was in view,
" They launched and sent their pinnace to convey
" The monarch thence: but he no sooner knew
" Of the fell orc, and those he made his prey,
" Than he, without more thought, would him pursue
" And follow, wheresoe'er he bent his way.
" To lose Lucina is such cruel pain,
" That life is loathsome save he her regain.

XXXVIII.

" When on the newly printed sand his eyes
" Norandine fixt, he with the swiftness sped
" With which the rage of love a man supplies,
" Until he reached the cave of which I said,
" Where we, enduring greater agonies
" Than e'er were suffered, there await in dread
" The orc, and deem at every sound we hear,
" The famished brute about to re-appear.

XXXIX.

" The monarch to the cave did Fortune guide,
" When the orc's wife alone was in the lair.
" Seeing the king; ' Fly!—Woe to thee!' (she cried)
' Should the orc take thee!'—' Woeful every where
' I cannot choose but be,' (the king replied)
' Whether he take or miss me, kill or spare.
' Not hither I by chance have wandered, I
' Come with desire beside my wife to die.'

XL.

" He afterwards the dame for tidings pressed
" Of those the orc had taken on the shore;
" And of Lucina above all the rest;
" If slain or prisoner kept. With kindly lore,
" She Norandino, in return, addressed;
" And said, ' Lucina lived, nor need he more
' Have of her future safety any dread,
' For the orc on flesh of woman never fed.[8]

XLI.

' Of this you may behold the proof in me,
' And all these other dames who with me dwell;
' Nor me, nor them the orc offends, so we
' Depart not ever from this caverned cell.
' But vainly who would from her prison flee,
' Hopes peace or pardon from our tyrant fell:
' Buried alive, or bound with griding band,
' Or, in the sun, stript naked on the sand.

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XLII.

'When hither he to-day conveyed your crew,
'The females from the males he severed not;
'But, as he took them, in confusion threw
'All he had captive made, into that grot.
'He will scent out their sex; nor tremble, you,
'Lest he the women slay: the others' lot
'Is fixt; and, of four men or six a-day,
'Be sure the greedy orc will make his prey.

XLIII.

'I have no counsel for you how to free
'The lady; but content thyself to hear,
'She in no danger of her life will be,
'Who will our lot, in good or evil, share.
'But go, for love of Heaven, my son, lest thee
'The monster smell, and on thy body fare;
'For when arrived, he sniffs about the house,
'And, such his subtle scent, can wind a mouse.

XLIV.

"To her the amorous monarch made reply,
'That he the cave would not abandon, ere
'He saw Lucina, and near her to die,
'Than to live far from her, esteemed more dear.'
—"Seeing that she can nothing more supply
"Fitted to shake the purpose of the peer,
"Upon a new design the matron hits,
"Pursued with all her pains, with all her wits.

XLV.

"With slaughtered sheep and goat was evermore
"The cavern filled, the numerous flock's increase,
"Which served her and her household as a store;
"And from the ceiling dangled many a fleece.
"The dame made Norandino from a boar
"And huge he-goat's fat bowels take the grease,
"And with the suet all his members pay,
"Until he drove his natural scent away.

XLVI.

"And when she thought he had imbibed the smell
"Which the rank goat exhales, she took the hide,
"And made him creep into the shaggy fell;
"Who was well covered by that mantle wide.
"Him in this strange disguise she from the cell
"Crawling (for such was her command) did guide,
"Where, prisoned by a stone, in her retreat,
"Was hid his beauteous lady's visage sweet.

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XLVII.

"King Norandine, as bid, took up his ground
"Before the cavern, on the greensward laid,
"That he might enter with the flock who wound
"Homeward; and longing sore, till evening stayed.
"At eve he hears the hollow elder's sound,
"Upon whose pipes the wonted tune was played,
"Calling his sheep from pasture to their rock,
"By the fell swain who stalked behind his flock.

XLVIII.

"Think if his heart is trembling at its core,
"When Norandino hears the approaching strains;
"And now advancing to the cavern door,
"The sight of that terrific face sustains!
"But if fear shook him, pity moved him more:
"You see if he loves well or only feigns!
"The orc removed the stone, unbarred the cote,
"And the king entered, amid sheep and goat.

XLIX.

"His flock so housed, to us the orc descended,
"But first had care the cavern door to close:
"Then scented all about, and having ended
"His quest, two wretches for his supper chose.
"So is remembrance by this meal offended.
"It makes me tremble yet: this done, he goes;
"And being gone, the king his goatish vest
"Casts off, and folds his lady to his breast.

L.

"Whereas she him with pleasure should descry,
"She, seeing him, but suffers grief and pain.
"She sees him thither but arrived to die,
"Who cannot hinder her from being slain.
'"Twas no small joy 'mid all the woes, that I,'
"To him exclaimed Lucina, 'here sustain,
'That thou wert not among us found to-day,
'When hither I was brought, the monster's prey.

LI.

'For though to find myself about to leave
'This life, be bitter and afflict me sore,
'Such is our common instinct, I should grieve
'But for myself; but whether thee, before
'Or after me, the orc of life bereave,
'Assure thyself thy death will pain me more
'Than mine.'. "And thus the dame persists to moan
"More Norandino's danger than her own."

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LII.

'A hope conducts me here,' the monarch said,
'To save thee and thy followers every one;
'And, if I cannot, I were better dead,
'Than living without light of thee, my sun!
'I trust to scape, as hither I have sped;
'As ye shall all, if, as ourselves have done,
'To compass our design, you do not shrink
'To imbue your bodies with the loathsome stink.'

LIII.

"The trick he told, wherewith the monster's smell
"To cheat, as first to him the wife had told:
"In any case to clothe us in the fell,
"That he may feel it issuing from the fold.
"As many men as women in the cell,
"We slay (persuaded by the monarch bold)
"As many goats as with our number square,
"Of those which stink the most and oldest are.

LIV.

"We smeared our bodies with the fruitful grease
"Which round about the fat intestines lay,
"And clothed our bodies with the shaggy fleece:
"This while from golden dwelling broke the day.
"And now, his flock returning to release,
"We viewed the shepherd, with the dawning ray;
"Who, giving breath to the sonorous reeds,
"Piped forth his prisoned flock to hill and meads.

LV.

"He held his hand before the opened lair,
"Lest with the herd we issued from the den,
"And stopt us short; but feeling wool or hair
"Upon our bodies, let us go again.
"By such a strange device we rescued were,
"Clothed in our shaggy fleeces, dames and men:
"Nor any issuing thence the monster kept,
"Till thither, sore alarmed, Lucina crept.

LVI.

"Lucina—whether she abhorred the scent,
"And, like us others, loathed herself to smear,
"—Or whether with a slower gait she went
"Than might like the pretended beast's appear,
"—Or whether, when the orc her body hent,
"Her dread so mastered her, she screamed for fear,
"—Or that her hair escaped from neck or brow,
"Was known; nor can I well inform you how.

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LVII.

" So were we all intent on our own case,
" We for another's danger had no eyes:
" Him, turning at the scream, I saw uncase
" Already her whom he had made his prize,
" And force her to the cavern to retrace
" Her steps: we, couching in our quaint disguise,
" Wend with the flock, where us the shepherd leads,
" Through verdant mountains, into pleasant meads.

LVIII.

" There we awaited, till beneath the shade
" Secure, we saw the beaked orc asleep;
" When one along the shore of ocean made,
" And one betook him to the mountain steep.
" King Norandine his love alone delayed;
" Who would return disguised among the sheep,
" Nor from the place depart, while life remained,
" Unless his faithful consort he regained.

LIX.

" For when before, on the flock issuing out,
" He saw her prisoned in the cave alone,
" Into the orc's wide throat he was about
" To spring; so grief had reason overthrown,
" And he advanced even to the monster's snout,
" And, but by little, scaped the grinding stone:
" Yet him the hope detained amid the flock,
" Trusting to bear Lucina from the rock.

LX.

" The orc, at eve, when to the cave again
" He brings the herd, nor finds us in the stall,
" And knows that he must supperless remain,
" Lucina guilty of the whole does call,
" Condemned to stand, fast girded with a chain,
" In open air, upon the summit tall.
" The king who caused her woes, with pitying eye
" Looks on, and pines,—and only cannot die.

LXI.

" Morning and evening, her, lamenting sore,
" Ever the unhappy lover might survey;
" What time he grieving went afield before
" The issuing flock, or homeward took his way.
" She, with sad face, and suppliant evermore,
" Signed that for love of Heaven he would not stay;
" Since there he tarried at great risk of life,
" Nor could in any thing assist his wife.

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LXII.

" So the orc's wife, as well upon her side,
" Implored him to depart, but moved him nought;
" To go without Lucina he denied,
" And but remained more constant in his thought.
" In this sad servitude he long was tried,
" By Love and Pity bound: till Fortune brought
" A pair of warriors to the rocky won,
" Gradasso, and Agrican's redoubted son:*

LXIII.

" Where, with their arms so wrought the champions brave,
" They freed Lucina from the chains she wore,
" (Though her Wit less than Fortune served to save)
" And running to the sea their burden bore:
" Her to her father, who was there, they gave.
" This was at morn, when in the cavern hoar,
" Mixt with the goats, king Norandino stood,
" Which ruminating, chewed their grassy food:

LXIV.

" But when, at day-light, 'twas unbarred, and now
" He was instructed that his wife was gone;
" For the orc's consort told the tale, and how,
" In every point, the thing rehearsed was done;
" He thanked his God, and begged, with promised vow,
" That, since 'twas granted her such ill to shun,
" He would direct his wife to some repair,
" Whence he might free her, by arms, gold, or prayer.

LXV.

" Together with the flat-nosed herd his way
" He took, and for green meads rejoicing made.
" He here expected, till the monster lay
" Extended, underneath the gloomy shade:
" Then journeyed all the night and all the day;
" Till, of the cruel orc no more afraid,
" He climbed a bark on Satalia's strand,
" And, three days past, arrived on Syrian land.

LXVI.

" In Cyprus, and in Rhodes, by tower and town,
" Which in near Egypt, Turkey, or Afric lay,
" The king bade seek Lucina up and down,
" Nor could hear news of her till the other day.
" The other day, his father-in-law made known,
" He had her safe with him. What caused her stay
" In Nicosia, was a cruel gale
" Which had long time been adverse to her sail.

* Mandricardo.

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LXVII.

"The king, for pleasure of the tidings true,
" Prepares the costly feast in solemn state;
" And will on each fourth moon that shall ensue
" Make one, resembling this we celebrate.
" Pleased of that time the memory to renew
" That he, in the orc's cavern, had to wait,
" —For four months and a day—which is to-morrow;
" When he was rescued from such cruel sorrow.

LXVIII.

" The things related I in part descried,
" And from him, present at the whole, heard more;
" From Norandine, through calend and through ide,
" Pent, till he changed to smiles his anguish sore:
" And if from other you hear aught beside,
" Say, he is ill instructed in his lore."
The Syrian gentleman did thus display
The occasion of that feast and fair array.

LXIX.

Large portion of the night, in like discourse,
Was by those cavaliers together spent,
Who deemed that Love and Pity's mickle force
Was proved in that so dread experiment;
Then rising, when the supper's sumptuous course
Was cleared, to good and pleasant lodgings went;
And, as the ensuing morning fairly broke,
To sounds of triumph and rejoicing woke.

LXX.

The circling drums' and trumpets' echoing strain
Assemble all the town within the square;
And now, when mixt with sound of horse and wain,
Loud outcries through the streets repeated are,
Sir Gryphon dons his glittering arms again,
A panoply of those esteemed most rare;
Whose mail, impassable by spear or brand,
She, the white fay, had tempered with her hand.

LXXI.

The man of Antioch in his company,
Armed him (a recreant worse than he was none),
Provided by their landlord's courtesy
With sturdy spears and good, the course to run;
Who with his kindred, a fair chivalry,
To bring the warriors to the square is gone;
With squires afoot and mounted upon steed,
Whom he bestowed, as aptest for their needs.

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LXXII.

They in the square arrived and stood aside,
Nor of themselves awhile would make display;
Better to see the martial gallants ride
By twos and threes, or singly, to the fray.
One told, by colours cunningly allied,
His joy or sorrow to his lady gay;
One, with a painted Love on crest or shield,
If she were cruel or were kind, revealed.

LXXIII.

It was the Syrians' practice in that age
To arm them in this fashion of the west.
Haply this sprung out of their vicinage
And constant commerce with the Franks, possest
In those days of the sacred heritage,
That God incarnate with his presence blest;
Which now, to them abandoned by the train
Of wretched Christians, heathen hounds profane.

LXXIV.

God's worshippers, where they should couch the lance,
For furtherance of his holy faith and true,
Against each other's breast the spear advance,
To the destruction of the faithful few.
You men of Spain, and you, ye men of France,
And Switzers, turn your steps elsewhere, and you,
Ye Germans, worthier empire to acquire;
For that *is* won for Christ, which you desire.

LXXV.

If verily most Christian you would be,
—I speak to you, that Catholic are hight—
Why slain by you Christ's people do I see?
Wherefore are they despoiled of their right?
Why seek you not Jerusalem to free
From renegades? By Turkish Moslemite
Impure, why is Byzantium, with the best
And fairest portion of the world, possest?

LXXVI.

Thou Spain, hast thou not fruitful Afric nigh?[9]
And has she not in sooth offended more
Than Italy? yet her to scathe, that high
And noble enterprize wilt thou give o'er.
Alas! thou sleepest, drunken Italy,
Of every vice and crime the fetid sewer!
Nor grievest, as a handmaid, to obey,
In turn, the nations that have owned thy sway.

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LXXVII.

If fear of famishing within thy cave,
Switzer, does thee to Lombardy convey,
And thou, among our people, dost but crave
A hand to give thee daily bread, or slay,—
The Turk has ready wealth; across the wave,
Drive him from Europe or from Greece away:
So shalt thou in those parts have wherewithal
To feed thy hunger, or more nobly fall.

LXXVIII.

I to the German neighbour of thy lair
Say what I say to thee; the wealth o' the west,
Which Constantine brought off from Rome, is there—
Brought off the choicest, gave away the rest[10]—
There golden Hermus and Pactolus are,
Mygdonia and Lydia: nor that country blest,
Which many tales for many praises note,
If thou wouldst thither wend, is too remote.

LXXIX.

Thou mighty Lion, that art charged to keep
The keys of Paradise, a weighty care,
Oh! let not Italy lie plunged in sleep,
If thy strong hand is planted in her hair.
To thee, his shepherd, God, to guide his sheep,
Has given that wand and furious name to bear;
That thou may'st roar, and wide thine arms extend,
And so from greedy wolves thy flock defend.

LXXX.

But whither have I roved! who evermore
So from one topic to the other stray?
Yet think not I the road I kept before
To have missed so far, but I can find my way.
I said, the Syrians then observed the lore
Of arming like the Christians of that day.
So that Damascus' crowded square was bright
With corslet, plate, and helm of belted knight.

LXXXI.

The lovely ladies from their scaffolds throw
Upon the jousters yellow flowers and red;
While these, as loud the brazen trumpets blow,
Make their steeds leap and wheel and proudly tread.
Each, rode he well or ill, his art would show,
And with the goring spur his courser bled.
Hence this good cavalier earns fame and praise,
While others scornful hoots and laughter raise.

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LXXXII.

A suit of arms was prize of the assay,
Presented to the king some days before;
Which late a merchant found upon the way
Returning from Armenia; this the more
To grace, a vest, with noblest tissue gay,
The Syrian king subjoined, so powdered o'er
With jewels, gold, and pearls in rich device,
They made the meed a thing of passing price.

LXXXIII.

If the good king had known the panoply,
This he had held above all others dear;
Nor this had given, as full of courtesy,
To be contended for with sword and spear.
'Twere long to tell who so unworthily
Had erst mistreated thus the goodly gear,
That by the way the harness had been strowed,
A prey to whosoever past the road.

LXXXIV.

Of this you more in other place shall hear.
Of Gryphon now I tell, who at the just
Arrived, saw broken many a knightly spear,
And more than one good stroke and one good thrust.
Eight were there who made league together, dear
To Norandine, and held in sovereign trust;
Youths quick in arms and practised in the shock:
All lords, or scions of illustrious stock.

LXXXV.

At open barriers, one by one, the place
They kept against all comers for a day;
At first with lance, and next with sword or mace,
While them the king delighted to survey.
Ofttimes they pierce the corslet's iron case,
And every thing in fine perform in play,
Which foemen do that deadly weapons measure,
Save that the king may part them at his pleasure.

LXXXVI.

That witless Antiochite, who, worthily,
By name was cowardly Martano hight,
Thinking, because his comrade, he must be
Partaker of the noble Gryphon's might,
Into the martial press rides valiantly,
Then stops; and the issue of a furious fight,
Which had begun between two cavaliers,
To wait, retiring from the strife, appears.

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LXXXVII.

Seleucia's lord, of those companions one,
Combined in that emprize to keep the place,
Who then a course with bold Ombruno run,
Wounded the unhappy warrior in mid-face,
So that he slew him; mourned by every one,
Who as a worthy knight the warrior grace,
And over and above his worth, before
All others, hold him for his courteous lore.

LXXXVIII.

When vile Martano from his place discerned
The fate which might be *his* with fearful eye,
Into his craven nature he returned,
And straight began to think how he might fly:
But him from flight the watchful Gryphon turned,
And, after much ado, with act and cry,
Urged him against a knight upon the ground,
As at the ravening wolf men slip the hound;

LXXXIX.

Who will pursue the brindled beast for ten,
Or twenty yards, and, after, stop to bay;
When he beholds his flashing eyes, and when
He sees the griesly beast his teeth display
'Twas thus, before those valiant gentlemen
And princes, present there in fair array,
Fearful Martano, seized with panic dread,
Turned to the right his courser's rein and head.

XC.

Yet he who would excuse the sudden wheel,
Upon his courser might the blame bestow:
But, after, he so ill his strokes did deal,
Demosthenes his cause might well forego.
With paper armed he seems, and not with steel,
So shrinks he at the wind of every blow:
At length he breaks the ordered champions through,
Amid loud laughter from the circling crew.

XCI.

Clapping of hands, and cries, at every turn,
Were heard from all that rabble widely spread.
As a wolf sorely hunted makes return
To earth, to his retreat Martano fled.
Gryphon remained, and sullied with the scorn
Esteemed himself, which on his mate was shed;
And rather than be there, he, in his ire,
Would gladly find himself i' the midst of fire.

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XCII.

With burning heart, and visage red with shame,
He thinks the knight's disgrace is all his own,
Because by deeds like his with whom he came,
He weens the mob expects to see him known.
So that it now behoves his valour flame
More clear than light, or they, to censure prone,
—Errs he a finger's breadth—an inch—will swell
His fault, and of that inch will make an ell.

XCIII.

Already he the lance upon his thigh
Has rested, little used to miss the foe:
Then makes with flowing rein his courser fly,
And next, somedeal advanced, directs the blow;
And, smiting, puts to the last agony
Sidonia's youthful lord, by him laid low.
O'ercome with wonder each assistant rises,
Whom sore the unexpected deed surprises.

XCIV.

Gryphon returned, and did the weapon wield,
Whole and recovered, which he couched before,
And in three pieces broke it on the shield
Which bold Laodicèa's baron bore.
Thrice or four times about to press the field
He seemed, and lay along the crupper, sore
Astound; yet rose at length, unsheathed his blade,
Wheeled his good courser, and at Gryphon made.

XCV.

Gryphon, who in his saddle sees the peer
Advancing towards him, nor unseated by
The encounter, says; "The failure of the spear,
"In a few strokes the sabre shall supply;"
And on his temples smote a stroke so shear
It seemed that it descended from the sky;
And matched it with another, and again
Another, till he stretched him on the plain.

XCVI.

Here two good brothers of Apamia were,
In tourney wont to have the upper hand:
Corimbo named and Thyrsis was the pair;
Both overturned by Gryphon on the land.
One at the encounter left his saddle bare,
On the other Gryphon used his trenchant brand:
This valiant knight was, in the common trust,
Sure to obtain the honours of the just.

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XCVII.

Bold Salinterno, mid the warlike train,
Was in the lists, vizier and marshal hight,
Who had the government of all that reign,
And was, withal, a puissant man of might:
The tourney's prize he sees, with much disdain,
About to be borne off by foreign knight.
A lance he snatches, and to Gryphon cries,
And him with many menaces defies.

XCVIII.

But he makes answer with a massy spear,
Out of ten others chosen as the best;
And levelling at the buckler of the peer,
For greater surety, pierces plate and breast.
'Twixt rib and rib, it bored the cavalier,
Issuing a palm behind. To all the rest,
The king excepted, welcome was the blow:
For each was greedy Salinterno's foe.

XCIX.

Two of Damascus next Sir Gryphon sped,
Hermophilo and Carmondo. *This*, arrayed
Under his flag, the king's militia led;
That was as lord high admiral obeyed.
This lightly at the shock on earth was shed,
And *that*, reversed, upon the ground o'erlaid
By his weak horse, too feeble to withstand
Sir Gryphon's mighty push and puissant hand.

C.

Yet in the field remained Seleucia's knight,
The best of all the other seven at need;
And one who well accompanied his might
With perfect armour and a gallant steed.
Both at the helmet, where it locks, take sight,
And with their spears to the encounter speed:
But Gryphon hardest smote, whose paynim foe
Lost his left stirrup, staggered by the blow.

CI.

They cast the truncheons down, their coursers wheel,
And, full of daring, with drawn falchions close.
Sir Gryphon was the first a stroke to deal,
Which might have split an anvil; at the blow's
Descent, the shield is splintered—bone and steel—
This had its lord mid thousand others chose;
And, but 'twas double, and the coat as well,
The sword had cleft the thigh on which it fell.

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CII.

He of Seleucia at Sir Gryphon's casque,
At the same time, so fell a blow address't,
It would have rent and torn the iron mask,
Had it not been enchanted like the rest.
The paynim's labour is a fruitless task,
Of arms so hard Sir Gryphon is possest;
Who has the foe's already cleft and broke
In many parts, nor thrown away a stroke.

CIII.

Each one might see how much Seleucia's lord
Was overmatched by Gryphon, and that day,
The worsted man had perished by the sword,
Had not the monarch quickly stopt the fray.
To his guard king Norandino spake the word,
And bade them enter, and the duel stay:
They part the knights, whom they asunder bear,
And much the king is lauded for his care.

CIV.

The eight, who had to keep the field pretended
From all the world, nor yet their part had done
On a sole knight,—their quarrel ill defended,—
Had vanished from the tilt-yard one by one.
The others, who with them should have contended,
Stood idle; for to answer them was none.
Since Gryphon had forestalled, in the debate,
What they should all have done against those eight;

CV.

And, for such little time endured the play,
Less than an hour sufficed to finish all.
But Norandine, the pastime to delay,
And to continue it till even-fall,
Descending from his place, bade clear the way;
And the huge squad divided, at his call,
Into two troops, whom, ranked by blood and might,
The monarch formed, and matched for other fight.

CVI.

Sir Gryphon, during this, had made return
Homeward, with anger and with fury stung;
Less thinking of his honours than the scorn
Which on the vile Martano had been flung.
Hence, from himself the opprobrious shame to turn,
Martano now employs his lying tongue;
And she, the false and cunning courtezan,
Assists him in his scheme as best she can.

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CVII.

Whether the youth believed the tale or no,
He the excuse received, like one discreet;
And deemed it best for them at once to go,
And secretly and silently retreat,
For fear, that if the populace should know
Martano base, they him might ill entreat.
So, by short ways and close, they quit the abode,
And issue from the gates upon their road.

CVIII.

Sir Gryphon, was he or his horse foredone
With toil, or was it sleep his eyes down-weighed,
Ere yet the troop beyond two miles had gone,
At the first inn upon the highway stayed.
He doffed his armour all, and morion,
And had the steeds of trappings disarrayed;
And next alone he to a chamber sped,
Locked himself in, undrest, and went to bed.

CIX.

No sooner he his head had rested there,
Than, with deep sleep opprest, he closed his eye:
So heavily, no badgers in their lair,
Or dormice, overcome with slumber, lie.
Martano and Origille, to take the air,
Entered this while a garden which was nigh;
And there the strangest fraud together bred,
Which ever entered into mortal head.

CX.

Martano schemed to take away the steed
And gear, in which Sir Gryphon had been dight,
And stand before the monarch, in the weed
Of him who had in joust so proved his might.
As he had shaped in thought, he did the deed:
He took away the warrior's horse, more white
Than milk, his buckler, surcoat, arms, and crest;
In all Sir Gryphon's knightly ensigns drest.

CXI.

He, who was clad in trappings not his own,
Like the ass mantled in the lion's hide,
As he expected, to the king, unknown,
Was called in place of Gryphon: when descried
Of Norandine, he rising from his throne,
Embraced and kissed, and placed him by his side:
Nor deems enough to praise and hold him dear,
But wills that all around his praise should hear:

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CXII.

And bids them the sonorous metal blow,
Proclaiming him the conqueror of that day:
And round about loud voices, high and low,
The unworthy name throughout the lists convey.
He wills that, side by side, with him shall go
The knight, when homeward he shall take his way;
And him such favour shows, intent to please,
As might have honoured Mars or Hercules.

CXIII.

Him lodgings fair he gave, wherein to dwell
At court; and she who with the peer did ride
Was honoured by the courteous king as well,
—False Origille,—with knight and page supplied.
But it is time that I of Gryphon tell;
Who unsuspecting, she, or wight beside,
Him would with treacherous stratagem deceive,
Had fallen asleep, nor ever waked till eve.

CXIV.

When he how late it was, awaking, knew,
With speed he from the chamber did withdraw;
And hastened where he, with the other crew,
Left Origille and her false brother-in-law:
And when, nor these, nor, upon better view,
His armour nor his wonted clothes he saw,
Suspicious waxed; and more suspicion breed
The ensigns of his comrade left instead.

CXV.

The host, arriving, him at full possest
Of every thing,—and how, in white array,
That warrior, with the lady and the rest,
Had to the city measured back their way.
By little and by little, Gryphon guessed
What love from him had hidden till that day;
And knew, to his great sorrow, in the other
Origille's paramour, and not her brother.

CXVI.

Now he lamenting for his folly stood,
That having heard the truths the pilgrim said,
He should have let her story change his mood,
Who him before so often had betrayed.
He might have venged himself, nor did;—now would,
Too late, inflict the punishment delayed;
Constrained (a crying error!) in his need
To take that wily treachour's arms and steed.

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CXVII.

He better would have gone like naked man,
Than braced the unworthy cuirass on his breast;
Or hastened the detested shield to span,
Or place upon his helm the scorned crest.
But of the lover, and that courtezan,
He, passion mastering reason, took the quest:
And bending to Damascus' gate his way,
Arrived an hour before the close of day.

CXVIII.

On the left hand a castle richly dight
Stood nigh the gate, to which Sir Gryphon rode.
Besides, that it was strong and armed for fight,
Filled with rare chambers was the rich abode.
The first of Syria, king, and lord, and knight,
And lady, in a gentle group bestowed,
There in an open gallery fairly met,
Were at their glad and costly supper set.

CXIX.

With the high tower the beauteous gallery, clear
Beyond the city-wall, projected out,
From whence might be discovered, far and near,
The spacious fields and different roads about.
When Gryphon now, in his opprobrious gear,
And arms, dishonoured by the rabble's flout,
Makes, by ill fortune, to the gate resort,
He by the king is seen, and all his court:

CXX.

And, taken for the man whose crest he wears,
In dame and knight moves laughter, through the ring.
The vile Martano, as a man who shares
The royal grace, sits next below the king;
And next, she, whom her love so fitly pairs;
Whom Norandino gaily questioning,
Demands of them, who is the coward knight,
That of his honour makes so passing light;

CXXI.

Who, after feat so base and foul, anew
Approaches, with such front and shameless cheer,
—And cries, "It seems a thing unheard, that you,
"An excellent and worthy cavalier,
"Should take this man for your companion, who
"Has not in all our wide Levant his peer.
"Did you with him for contrast-sake combine,
"That so your valour might more brightly shine?

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CXXII.

"—But did not love for you my will restrain,
"By the eternal gods, I truly swear,
"He should endure such ignominious stain,
"As I am wont to make his fellows share:
"Him would I make of my long-nursed disdain
"Of cowardice perpetual record bear.
"To you, by whom he hither was conveyed,
"If now unpunished, let his thanks be paid.

CXXIII.

That vessel of all filthy vices, he,
Made answer; "Mighty sir, I cannot say
"Who is the stranger, that fell in with me
"Journeying from Antioch hither, by the way:
"But him I worthy of my company
"Deemed, by his warlike semblance led astray.
"I nothing of his deeds have heard or seen,
"Save what ill feats to-day have witnessed been;

CXXIV.

"Which moved me so, it little lacked but I,
"For punishment of his unworthy fear,
"Had put him out of case again to ply,
"In martial tournament, the sword or spear;
"And, but in reverence to your majesty
"And presence, I forbore my hand to rear,
"Not for his sake:—nor be thy mercy showed
"On him, as my companion on the road;

CXXV.

"Whose former fellowship appears a stain;
"And ever 'twill sit heavy at my heart,
"If I, uninjured, see the wretch again
"'Scape, to the scandal of the warlike art.
"'Twere better he from tower, a worthy pain,
"Were gibbeted, than suffered to depart:
"Hung as a beacon for the coward's gaze.
"Such were a princely deed, and worthy praise."

CXXVI.

A voucher he in Origilla had,
Who well, without a sign, his purpose read.
"I deem not," cried the king, "his works so bad,
"That they should cost the stranger knight his head:
"Enough that he again the people glad,
"For penance of his weighty sin." This said,
He quickly called a baron of his crew,
And him enjoined the deed he was to do.

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CXXVII.

With many armed men that baron fares,
And to the city-gate descending, here
Collects his troop, and for the attempt prepares,
Waiting the coming of the cavalier;
And him surprises so at unawares,
He, softly, 'twixt two bridges, takes the peer;
And him detains, with mockery and scorn,
In a dark chamber, till returning morn.

CXXVIII.

The early sun had scarce his golden hair
Uplifted from his ancient nurse's breast,
Beginning, upon Alpine regions bare,
To chase the shades and gild the mountain-crest,
When Martan', fearing Gryphon might declare
His wrong, and to the king the truth attest,
Retorting upon him the slander cast,
Took leave, and thence upon his journey past.

CXXIX.

His ready wit a fit excuse supplies
Why he stays not, to see the recreant shown.
He is with other gifts, beside the prize,
Rewarded for the victory, not his own,
And letters patent, drawn in ample wise,
Wherein his lofty honours wide are blown.
Let him depart; I promise he shall meet
A guerdon worthy of his treacherous feat.

CXXX.

Gryphon is brought with shame into the square,
When it is fully thronged with gazing wight,
Whom they of cuirass and of helmet bare,
And leave in simple cassock, meanly dight;
And, as to slaughter he conducted were,
Place on a wain, conspicuous to the sight;
Harnessed to which two sluggish cows are seen,
Weary and weak, and with long hunger lean.

CXXXI.

Thronging about the ignoble car, appear
Brazen-faced boy and girl of evil fame,
Who, each in turn, will play the charioteer,
And all assail the knight with bitter blame.
The boys might be a cause of greater fear,
For, joined to marks and mows, and words of shame,
The warrior they with volleyed stones would slay,
But that the wiser few their fury stay.

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CXXXII.

That which of his disgrace had been the ground,
Though no true evidence of guilt, his mail
And plate, are dragged in due dishonour round,
Suspended at the shameful waggon's tail.
The wain is stopt, and to the trumpet's sound,
Heralds, in front of a tribunal's pale,
His shame, before his eyes, amid the crowd,
(Another's evil deed) proclaim aloud.

CXXXIII.

They take their prisoner thence, and so repair
In front of temple, dwelling-house, and store;
Nor any cruel name of mockery spare,
Nor leave unsaid a word of filthy lore;
And him at last without the city bear:
The foolish rabble, trusting evermore
Their thrall to banish to the sound of blows,
Who passing little of its prisoner knows.

CXXXIV.

The warrior's gyves no sooner they undo,
And from their manacles free either hand,
Than Gryphon seizes shield and sword, and, through
The rabble, makes long furrows with his brand.
With pike and spear unfurnished was the crew,
Who without weapons came, a witless band.
The rest for other canto I suspend,
For, sir, 'tis time this song should have an end.

CANTO XVIII.

ARGUMENT.

Gryphon is venged. Sir Mandricardo goes
In search of Argier's king. Charles wins the fight.
Marphisa Norandino's men o'erthrows.
Due pains Martano's cowardice requite.
A favouring wind Marphisa's galley blows,
For France with Gryphon bound and many a knight.
The field Medoro and Cloridano tread,
And find their monarch Dardinello dead.

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I.

High minded lord! your actions evermore
I have with reason lauded, and still laud;
Though I with style inapt, and rustic lore,
You of large portion of your praise defraud:
But, of your many virtues, one before
All others I with heart and tongue applaud,
—That, if each man a gracious audience finds,
No easy faith your equal judgment blinds.

II.

Often, to shield the absent one from blame,
I hear you this, or other, thing adduce;
Or him you let, at least, an audience claim,
Where still one ear is open to excuse:
And before dooming men to scaith and shame,
To see and hear them ever is your use;
And ere you judge another, many a day,
And month, and year, your sentence to delay.

III.

Had Norandine been with your care endued,
What he by Gryphon did, he had not done.
Profit and fame have from your rule accrued;
A stain more black than pitch he cast upon
His name: through him, his people were pursued
And put death by Olivero's son;
Who at ten cuts or thrusts, in fury made,
Some thirty dead about the waggon laid.

IV.

Whither fear drives, in rout, the others all,
Some scattered here, some there, on every side,
Fill road and field; to gain the city-wall
Some strive, and smothered in the mighty tide,
One on another, in the gateway fall.
Gryphon, all thought of pity laid aside,
Threats not nor speaks, but whirls his sword about,
Well venging on the crowd their every flout.

V.

Of those who to the portal foremost fleed,
The readiest of the crowd their feet to ply,
Part, more intent upon their proper need
Than their friends' peril, raise the draw-bridge high:
Part, weeping and with deathlike visage, speed,
Nor turn their eyes behind them as they fly:
While, through the ample city, outcry loud,
And noise, and tumult rises from the crowd.

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VI.

Two nimble Gryphon seizes, mid the train,
When to their woe the bridge is raised; of one,
Upon the field the warrior strews the brain,
Which he beats out on a hard grinding stone;
Seized by the breast, the other of the twain
Over the city-wall by him is thrown.
Fear chills the townsmen's marrow, when they spy
The luckless wretch descending from the sky.

VII.

Many there were who feared in their alarms,
Lest o'er the wall Sir Gryphon would have vaulted;
Nor greater panic seized upon those swarms,
Than if the soldan had the town assaulted.
The sound of running up and down, of arms,
Of cry of Muezzins, on high exalted;
Of drums and trumpets, heaven, 'twould seem, rebounded,
And that the world was by the noise confounded.

VIII.

But I will to another time delay,
What chanced on this occasion, to recount.
'Tis meet I follow Charles upon his way,
Hurrying in search of furious Rodomont,
Who did the monarch's suffering people slay.
I said, with him, the danger to affront,
Went Namus, Oliver, the Danish peer,*
Avino, Avolio, Otho, and Berlinghier.

IX.

Eight lances' shock, that eight such warriors guide,
Which all at once against the king they rest,
Endured the stout and scaly serpent's hide,
In which the cruel Moor his limbs had drest.
As a barque rights itself,—the sheet untied,
Which held its sail,—by growing wind opprest;
So speedily Sir Rodomont arose.
Though a hill had been uprooted by the blows.

X.

Rainier and Guido, Richard, Salomon,
Ivan, Ughetto, Turpin, and the twain—
Angiolin, Angelier—false Ganellon,
And Mark and Matthew from St. Michael's plain,
With the eight of whom I spake, all set upon
The foe, with Edward and Sir Arimane;
Who leading succours from the English shore,
Had lodged them in the town short time before.

* Ogier.

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XI.

Not so, well-keyed into the solid stone,
Groans upon Alpine height the castle good,
When by rude Boreas' rage or Eurus' strown,
Uptorn are ash and fir in mountain-wood,
As groans Sir Rodomont, with pride o'erblown,
Inflamed with anger and with thirst of blood:
And, as the thunder and the lightning's fire
Fly coupled, such his vengeance and his ire.

XII.

He at *his* head took aim who stood most nigh;
Ughetto was the miserable wight,
Whom to the teeth he clove, and left to die;
Though of good temper was his helmet bright.
As well the others many strokes let fly
At him, himself; which all the warrior smite,
But harm (so hard the dragon's hide) no more,
Than needle can the solid anvil score.

XIII.

All the defences, round, abandoned are,
The unpeopled city is abandoned all;
For, where the danger is the greatest, there
The many give their aid, at Charles's call:
Through every street they hurry to the square,
Since flying nought avails, from work and wall.
Their bosoms so the monarch's presence warms,
That each again takes courage, each takes arms.

XIV.

As when within the closely-fastened cage
Of an old lioness, well used to fight,
An untamed bull is prisoned, to engage
The savage monster, for the mob's delight;
The cubs, who see him cresting in his rage,
And round the den loud-bellowing, to the sight
Of the huge beast's enormous horns unused,
Cower at a distance, timid and confused;

XV.

But if the mother spring at him, and hang,
Fixing her cruel tusks into his ear,
Her whelps as well will blood their greedy fang,
And, bold in her defence, assail the steer:
One bites his paunch, and one his back: so sprang
That band upon the paynim cavalier.
From roof and window, and from place more nigh,
Poured in a ceaseless shower, the weapons fly

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XVI.

Of cavaliers and footmen such the squeeze,
That hardly can the place the press contain:
They cluster there as thick as swarming bees,
Who thither from each passage troop amain.
So that, were they unarmed, and with more ease
Than stalks or turnips he could cleave the train,
Ill Rodomont in twenty days would clear
The gathering crowd, united far and near.

XVII.

Unknowing how himself from thence to free,[1]
The paynim by this game is angered sore,
Who little thins the gathering rabblery,
Staining the ground with thousands slain or more;
And all the while, in his extremity,
Finds that his breath comes thicker than before;
And sees he cannot pierce the hostile round,
Unless he thence escape while strong and sound.

XVIII.

The monarch rolls about his horrid eyes,
And sees that foes all outlets barricade;
But, at the cost of countless enemies,
A path shall quickly by his hand be made.
Where Fury calls him, lo! the felon hies,
And brandishes on high his trenchant blade,
To assail the newly entered British band,
Which Edward and Sir Ariman command.

XIX.

He who has seen the fence, in well-thronged square,
(Against whose stakes the eddying crowd is borne)
By wild bull broken, that has had to bear,
Through the long day, dogs, blows, and ceaseless scorn;
Who hunts the scattered people here and there,
And this, or that, now hoists upon his horn;
Let him as such, or fiercer yet, account,
When he breaks forth, the cruel Rodomont.

XX.

At one cross-blow fifteen or twenty foes
He hews, as many leaves without a head,
At cross or downright-stroke; as if he rows
Trashes in vineyard or in willow-bed.
At last all smeared with blood the paynim goes,
Safe from the place, which he has heaped with dead;
And wheresoe'er he turns his steps, are left
Heads, arms, and other members, maimed and cleft.

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XXI.

He from the square retires in such a mode,
None can perceive that danger him appals;
But, during this, what were the safest road,
By which to sally, he to thought recals.
He comes at last to where the river flowed
Below the isle, and past without the walls.
In daring men at arms and mob increase,
Who press him sore, nor let him part in peace.

XXII.

As the high-couraged beast, whom hunters start
In the wild Nomade or Massilian chace,
Who, even in flying, shows his noble heart,
And threatening seeks his lair with sluggish pace;
From that strange wood of sword, and spear, and dart,
Turns Rodomont, with action nothing base;
And still impeded by the galling foe,
Makes for the river with long steps and slow.

XXIII.

He turned upon the rabble-rout who bayed
Behind him, thrice or more, by anger driven,
And stained anew his falchion, by whose blade
More than a hundred deadly wounds were given.
But reason, finally, his fury stayed
Before the bloody carnage stank to heaven;[2]
And he, with better counsel, from the side
Cast himself down into Seine's foaming tide.

XXIV.

Athwart the current swam, with arms and all,
As if by corks upborn, the cavalier.
Though thou Antæus bred'st, and Hannibal,
O Africa! thou never bred'st his peer!—
When now across the stream, without the wall,
He turned, and saw the royal town appear,
—To have traversed all the city moved his ire,
Leaving it undestroyed by sword or fire;

XXV.

And him so sorely anger stung and pride,
Thither he thought a second time to go;
And from his inmost bosom groaned and sighed,
Nor would depart until he laid it low.
But he saw one along the river-side
Approach, who made him rage and hate forego;
Strait shall you hear who 'twas, approached the king,
But first I have to say of other thing.

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XXVI.

I have of haughty Discord now to say,
To whom the archangel Michael gave command,
To heat to enmity and fierce affray
The best of Agramant's besieging band.
She went that evening from the abbey gray,
Her task committing to another's hand;
—Left it to Fraud to feed, till her return,
The war, and make the fire she kindled burn;

XXVII.

And she believed, that she with greater power
Should go, did Pride with her as well repair;
And she (for all were guested in one bower)
In search of her had little way to fare.
Pride went with her; but, that in hall or tower,
A vicar too her charge might duly bear,
She for those days she absent thought to be,
For her lieutenant left Hypocrisy.

XXVIII.

The implacable Discord went, and with the dame,
(Companion of the enterprize, was Pride)
Upon her road; and found that, by the same,
Was journeying to the paynim camp, beside,
Comfortless Jealousy, with whom there came
A little dwarf, attending as a guide;
Who erst had been sent forward with advice
To Sarza's king, by beauteous Doralice.

XXIX.

When she fell into Mandricardo's hand,
(I have before recounted when and where)
She had in secret given the dwarf command,
He to the king should with the tidings fare;
By whom she hoped not vainly would be scanned
The tale her messenger was charged to bear,
But wonderous deeds be done for her relief,
With sad and signal vengeance on the thief.

XXX.

Jealousy had that little dwarf espied,
And kenned the reason of his mission too,
And joined him, journeying with him side by side,
Deeming that she therein a part might do.
Discord, with pleasure, Jealousy descried,
But with more joy, when she the occasion knew
Which thither brought the dame, who much (she wist)
Might in the task she had in hand assist.

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XXXI.

Of means to embroil the Sarzan and the son
Of Agrican,* she deems herself possest.
A certain mode to enrage these two is won;
And other means may work upon the rest.
She thither with the dwarfish page is gone,
Where the fierce Pagan in his clutch had prest
Proud Paris; and they reached the river-strand,
Exactly as the felon swam to land.

XXXII.

As soon as the redoubted Rodomont
Knew in the dwarf the courier of his dame,
He all his rage extinguished, cleared his front,
And felt his courage brighten into flame.
All else he deems the courier may recount,
Save that a wight had brought him scaith and shame,
And cries (encountering him with cheerful brow)
"How fares our lady? whither sent art thou?"

XXXIII.

"Nor mine nor thine that lady will I say,
"Who is another's thrall," the dwarf replied.
"We, on our road, encountered yesterday
"A knight, who seized and bore away the bride."
Jealousy, upon this, took up the play,
And, cold as asp, embraced the king: her guide
Pursued his tale, relating how the train,
Their mistress taken, by one man were slain.

XXXIV.

Her flint and steel, fell Discord, as he said,
Took forth, and somewhile hammered on the stone.
Pride, underneath, the ready tinder spread,
And the quick fire was in a moment blown:
This on the paynim's soul so fiercely fed,
He could not find a resting place: 'mid groan
And sob he storms, with horrid face and eye,
Which threats the elements and ample sky.

XXXV.

As tiger rages, who in vain descends
Into her den, and finds herself alone,
And, circling all the cavern, comprehends,
At last, that her beloved young are gone;
To ire, to rage like hers his wrath extends:
Nor night the king regards, nor rock, nor stone,
Nor stream:—Nor length of way nor storm arrest
The speed with which he on the plunderer prest.

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XXXVI.

So raging, to the pigmy dwarf who bore
The news, exclaimed the king, "Now hence away!"
Nor horse he waits, nor carriage, nor, before
Departing, deigns to *his* a word to say.
He hurries with such speed, that not with more
The lizard darts at noon across the way.
Horse had he none, but be he whose he might,
Would make his own the first which came in sight.

XXXVII.

Discord at this, who read his secret thought,
Exclaimed, as she looked smilingly on Pride,
'Through her he to a courser should be brought,
'By which new cause of strife should be supplied;
'And, that by him no other might be caught,
'She from his path would keep all steeds beside;
'And knew already where the prize to seek.'
—But her I leave, again of Charles to speak.

XXXVIII.

When, on the Saracen's departure, spent,
About king Charles, was the consuming flame,
He ranged his troops anew: some warriors went
To strengthen feeble posts which succours claim;
The rest against the Saracens are sent,
To give the foe checkmate and end the game;
And from Saint German's to Saint Victor's gates,
He pours the host, which on his signal waits.

XXXIX.

He these at Saint Marcellus' gate, where lay,
Outstretched a large circumference of plain,
Bade one another wait, in one array,
To reunite against the paynim train.
Inflaming every one to smite and slay,
In guise, that for a record should remain,
He made the various troops fall in below
Their banners, and the battle-signal blow.

XL.

Agramant has remounted in his sell,
While this is doing in his foe's despite,
And with the stripling* who loved Isabel,
Is waging perilous and fearful fight.
Lurcanio with Sobrino strives as well;
Rinaldo a troop encounters, whom the knight,
With Valour and with Fortune for his guide,
Charges, and breaks, and routs on every side.

* Zerbino.

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XLI.

While so the battle stands, king Charlemagne
Falls on the rear-guard of the paynim foe,
Where bold Marsilius halts the flower of Spain,
And forms the host, his royal flag below.
On these king Charlemagne impels his train,
Who, foot with horse to flank, against them go.
While so the deafening drum and trumpet sounds,
'Twould seem the spacious world the din rebounds.

XLII.

The Saracenic squadrons had begun
To bend, and all the army of the Moor
Had turned, disordered, broken, and undone,
Never to be arrayed or rallied more,
But that Grandonio stood, and Falsiron,
Tried oftentimes in greater ill before,
With Serpentine and Balugantes proud,
And the renowed Ferrau, who cried aloud:

XLIII.

"O valiant men," he—"O companions," cries,
"O brethren, stand, and yet your place maintain;
"Like cobweb-threads our cruel enemies
"Will find their works, if we our part sustain.
"What this day Fortune offers to our eyes,
"If now we conquer, see the praise, the gain!—
"If conquered, see the utter loss and shame
"Which will for ever wait upon your name!

XLIV.

He in this time a mighty lance had spanned,
And spurred at once against Sir Berlinghier,
Who Argaliffa guided with his hand,
And broke his helmet's frontal with the spear,
Cast him on earth, and with the cruel brand
Unhorsed perhaps eight other warriors near.
His mighty strokes discharging, at each blow,
He ever laid at least one horseman low.

XLV.

In other part, Rinaldo, in his mood,
Has slain more enemies than I can say.
Before the warlike knight no order stood;
You might have seen the ample camp give way.
No less Zerbino and Lurcanio good
Do deeds, which will be told in every day:
This, with a thrust, has bold Balastro slain,
That Finaduro's helm has cleft in twain.

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XLVI.

The first was of the Alzerban army head,
Ruled by Tardocco some short time before;
The other one the valiant squadrons led
Of Saphi, and Morocco, and Zamor.
'Where, 'mid the paynims,' might to me be said,
'Is knight whose sword can cleave or lance can gore?'
But step by step I go, and as I wind
My way, leave none who merits praise behind.

XLVII.

Zumara's king is not forgotten here,
Dardinel, who Sir Dulphin of the mount,
Claude of the wood, and Hubert, with the spear,
(Of Mirford he) and Elio did dismount,
And, with the faulchion, Stamford's cavalier,
Sir Anselm, Raymond and Sir Pinnamont
From London-town; though valiant were the twain;
Two stunned, one wounded, the four others slain.

XLVIII.

Yet will his squadron not so firmly stand,
Maugre the valour which his deeds display,
So firmly, as to wait the Christian band,
In number less, but steadier in array,
More used to joust and manage of the brand,
And all things appertaining to the fray.
Setta and Morocco turned, and seized, with dread,
Zumara and Canaries' islesmen fled.

XLIX.

But faster than the rest Alzerba flies,
Whom Dardinel opposed, and now with sore
Reproach, and now with prayer he moves, and tries
What best he deems their courage may restore.
"If good Almontes has deserved," he cries,
"That you should by his memory set such store,
"Now shall be seen—be seen, if you will me,
"His son, abandon in such jeopardy.

L.

"For sake of my green youth, I pray you stand,
"That youth whereon your hopes were wont to feed,
"And suffer not that, scattered by the brand,
"To Africa be lost our noble seed.
"Save you united go, be sure the land
"Is shut against you, wheresoe'er you speed.
"Too high a wall to climb is mountain-steep,
"The yawning sea a ditch too wide to leap.

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LI.

" Far better 'tis to perish than to be
" Torn by these dogs, or lie at their control.
" Since vain is every other remedy,
" Wait, friends, for love of Heaven, the advancing shoal:
" They are not gifted with more lives than we;
" Have but one pair of hands, have but one soul."
So saying, the bold youth, amid the crew
Of enemies, the Earl of Huntley slew.

LII.

Almontes' memory, through the Moorish bands,
Makes every bosom with such ardour glow,
They deem 'tis better to use arms and hands
In fight, than turn their backs upon the foe.
Taller than all William of Burnwich stands,
An Englishman, whom Dardinel brings low,
And equals with the rest; then smites upon,
And cleaves, the head of Cornish Aramon.

LIII.

Down fell this Aramon, and to afford
Him succour, thitherward his brother made;
But from the shoulder him Zumara's lord *
Cleft to the fork, with his descending blade;
Next Bogio de Vergalla's belly gored,
And from his debt absolved (the forfeit paid)
Who to return within six months, if life
Were granted him, had promised to his wife.

LIV.

Lurcanio next met Dardinello's eye;
He upon earth Dorchino had laid low,
Pierced through the throat, and hapless Gardo nigh
Cleft to the teeth; at him, as all too slow,
He from Altheüs vainly seeks to fly,
Whom as his heart Lurcanio loves, a blow
Upon his head behind the Scotchman speeds;
And, slaughtered by the stroke, the warrior bleeds.

LV.

Dardinel, to avenge him, took a spear,
And, should he lay the fierce Lurcanio dead,
Vowed to his Mahomet, if he could hear,
The mosque should have his empty arms: this said,
Ranging the field in haste, that cavalier
He in the flank, with thrust so full and dread,
Encountered, that it went through either side:
And he to *his* to strip the baron cried.

* Dardinello.

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LVI.

From me it sure were needless to demand,
If Ariôdantes, when his brother fell,
Was grieved; if he with his avenging hand
Among the damned would send Sir Dardinel;
But all access the circling troops withstand
And bar, no less baptized than infidel:
Yet would he venge himself, and with his blade,
Now here, now there, an open passage made.

LVII.

He charges, chases, breaks, and overthrows
Whoever cross him on the crowded plain;
And Dardinello, who his object knows,
Would fain the wish content; but him the train
Impedes as well, which round about him flows,
And renders aye his every purpose vain.
If one on all sides thins the Moorish rank,
The other slays Scot, Englishman, and Frank.

LVIII.

Fortune still blocked their path throughout the day,
So that they met not, 'mid that chivalry,
And kept one as a mightier champion's prey;
For rarely man escapes his destiny.
Behold the good Rinaldo turns that way!
That for this one no refuge there might be.
Lo! good Rinaldo comes: him Fortune guides,
And for his sword King Dardinel provides.

LIX.

But here enough for this one while is shown
Of their illustrious doings in the west;
'Tis time I seek Sir Gryphon, and make known
How he, with fury burning in his breast,
That rabble-rout had broke and overthrown,
Struck with more fear than ever men possest.
Thither speeds Norandine on that alarm,
And for his guard above a thousand arm.

LX.

King Norandino, girt with peer and knight,
Seeing on every side the people fly,
Rides to the gates, with squadron duly dight,
And at his hest the portals open fly.
Meanwhile Sir Gryphon, having put to flight
The weak and worthless rabble far and nigh,
The scorned arms (to keep him from that train),
Such as they were, took up and donned again.

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LXI.

And nigh a temple strongly walled, and round
Whose base a moat for its protection goes,
Upon a little bridge takes up his ground,
That him his enemies may not enclose.
Lo! loudly shouting, and with threatening sound,
A mighty squadron through the gateway flows.
The valiant Gryphon changes not his place,
And shows how small his fear by act and face.

LXII.

But when, approaching near, he saw the band,
He sallied forth to meet them by the way;
And wielding still his sword in either hand,
Made cruel havoc in the close array.
Then on the narrow bridge resumed his stand,
Nor there his hunters only held at bay:
Anew he sallied, and returned anew,
Aye leaving bloody signs when he withdrew.

LXIII.

Fore-stroke and back he deals, and on the ground
Horsemen and foot o'erthrows on every side:
This while the ample mob the knight surround,
And more and more the warfare rages wide.
At length Sir Gryphon fears he shall be drowned,
(So waxed their numbers) in the increasing tide;
And hurt in the left shoulder, through his mail,
And thigh, his wind as well begins to fail.

LXIV.

But Valour, who so oft befriends her own,
Makes him find grace in Norandino's eyes;
Who, while alarmed, he hurries there, o'erthrown
So many men, such heaps of dead espies,
While he views wounds, which Hector's hand alone
He weens could deal,—to him all testifies
That he had put an undeserved shame
Upon a cavalier of mighty name.

LXV.

Next seeing him more near, whose faulchion's sweep
Had dealt such deaths amid his chivalry,
And raised about himself that horrid heap,
And stained the water with that bloody dye,
He thought that he beheld Horatius keep,
Singly, the bridge against all Tuscany;
And vext, and anxious to remove the stain,
Recalled his men, and that with little pain.

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LXVI.

And, lifting his bare hand, in sign affied,
From ancient times, of treaty and of truce,
Repenting him, he to Sir Gryphon cried,
"It grieves me sorely, and I cannot choose
"But own my sin: let counsels which misguide,
"And my own little wit, such fault excuse.
"What by the vilest knight I thought to do,
"I to the best on earth have done in you.

LXVII.

"And though the bitter injuries and shame
"That have to thee through ignorance been done,
"Are equalled, and all cancelled by thy fame,
"And merged, in truth, in glory thou hast won;
"Whatever satisfaction thou canst claim,
"Within my power or knowledge, count upon,
"When I know how atonement may be made,
"By city, castle, or by money paid.

LXVIII.

"Demand of me this kingdom's moiety,
"And from this day thou its possessor art,
"Since not alone thy worth deserves this fee,
"But merits, I with this should give my heart;
"Then, pledge of faith and lasting love, to me,
"In the meanwhile, thy friendly hand impart."
So saying, from his horse the king descended,
And towards Gryphon his right-hand extended.

LXIX.

When he beheld the monarch's altered cheer,
Who bent to clasp his neck, towards him paced,
His sword and rancour laid aside, the peer
Him humbly underneath the hips embraced.[4]
King Norandine, who saw the sanguine smear
Of his two wounds, bade seek a leech in haste;
And bade them softly with the knight resort
Towards the town, and lodge him in his court.

LXX.

Here, wounded, he remained some days before
He could bear arms: but him, in the design
Of seeking out Sir Aquilant once more,
And good Astolpho, left in Palestine,
I quit; they vainly did his path explore,
After Sir Gryphon left the holy shrine,
Through Solyma in every place of note,
And many, from the Holy Land remote.

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LXXI.

One and the other are alike to seek
In the inquiry where the knight may use;
But they encounter with the pilgrim-Greek,
Who of false Origilla gives them news;
Relating, as of her he haps to speak,
That towards Antioch she her way pursues,
By a new leman of that city charmed,
Who her with fierce and sudden flame had warmed.

LXXII.

Aquilant asked him, if he had possest
Sir Gryphon of the news to them conveyed,
Who, hearing that he *had*, surmised the rest,—
Where he was gone, and by what motive swayed:
He followed Origilla, was manifest,
And had in quest of her for Antioch made,
To take her from his rival, and with view
On him some memorable scathe to do.

LXXIII.

Aquilant brooked not Gryphon such a feat,
Without him, and alone, should thus assay,
And took his armour and pursued his beat;
But first besought the duke he would delay
To visit France and his paternal seat,
Till he from Antioch measured back his way.
At Joppa he embarks, who deems by sea
The better and securer way to be.

LXXIV.

From the south-east up-sprung so strong a breeze,
And which for Gryphon's galley blew so right,
That the third day he Tyre's famed city sees,
And lesser Joppa quick succeeds to sight.
By Zibellotto and Baruti flees,
(Cyprus to larboard left) the galley light:
From Tripoli to Tortosa shapes her way,
And so to Lizza and Lajazzo's bay.

LXXV.

From thence, towards the east the pilot veered
Her ready tiller, prompt his course to scan;
And straightway for the wide Orontes steered,
And watched his time, and for the harbour ran.
Aquilant, when his bark the margin neared,
Bade lower the bridge, and issued, horse and man,
In armour, and along the river wended,
Up-stream, till he his way at Antioch ended.

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LXXVI.

To inform himself of that Martano bent;
And heard that he to Antioch was addrest,
With Origilla, where a tournament
Was to be solemnized by royal hest.
To track whom Aquilant was so intent,
Assured that Gryphon had pursued his quest,
He Antioch left again that very day,
But not by sea again would take his way.

LXXVII.

He towards Lidia and Larissa goes,[6]
—At rich Aleppo makes a longer stay.
God, to make plain that he, even here, bestows
On evil and on good their fitting pay,
At a league's distance from Mamuga, throws
Martano in the avenging brother's way,
Martano travelling with the tourney's prize,
Displayed before his horse in showy wise.

LXXVIII.

Sir Aquilant believed, at the first show,
His brother he in vile Martano spied,
For arms and vest, more white than virgin snow,
The coward in the warrior's sight belied,
And sprang towards him, with that joyful "Oh!"
By which delight is ever signified;
But changed his look and tone, when, nearer brought,
He sees that he is not the wight he sought:

LXXIX.

And through that evil woman's treachery,
Deemed Gryphon murdered by the cavalier;
And, "Tell me," he exclaimed, "thou, who must be
"Traitor and thief—both written in thy cheer—
"Whence are these arms? and wherefore do I thee
"View on the courser of my brother dear?
"Say is my brother slaughtered or alive?
"How didst thou him of horse and arms deprive?"

LXXX.

When Origilla hears him, in affright
She turns her palfrey, and for flight prepares:
But Aquilant, more quick, in her despite,
Arrests the traitress, ere she further fares.
At the loud threats of that all-furious knight,
By whom he so was taken unawares,
Martan' turns pale and trembles like a leaf,
Nor how to act or answer knows the thief.

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LXXXI.

Aquilant thundered still, and, to his dread,
A faulchion, pointed at his gullet, shewed,
And swore with angry menaces, the head
From him and Origilla should be hewed,
Save in all points the very truth be said.
Awhile on this ill-starred Martano chewed,
Revolving still what pretext he might try
To lessen his grave fault, then made reply:

LXXXII.

"Know, sir, you see my sister in this dame,
"And one of good and virtuous parents born,
"Though she has lately led a life of shame,
"And been by Gryphon foully brought to scorn;
"And, for I loathed such blot upon our name,
"Yet weened that she could ill by force be torn
"From such a puissant wight, I laid a scheme
"Her by address and cunning to redeem.

LXXXIII.

"With her I planned the means, who in her breast
"Nursed the desire a better life to prove,
"That she, when Gryphon was retired to rest,
"In silence from the warrior should remove.
"This done: lest he should follow on our quest,
"And so undo the web we vainly wove,
"Him we deprived of horse and arms, and we
"Are hither come together, as you see."

LXXXIV.

His cunning might have proved of good avail,
For Aquilant believed him easily;
And, save in taking Gryphon's horse and mail,
He to the knight had done no injury;
Bnt that he wrought so high the specious tale,
As manifested plainly, 'twas a lie.
In all 'twas perfect, save that he the dame
Had for his sister vouched with whom he came.

LXXXV.

Aquilant had in Antioch chanced to know
She was his concubine,—well certified
Of this by many,—and in furious glow
Exclaimed; "Thou falsest robber, thou hast lied!"
And dealt, with that, the recreant such a blow,
He drove two grinders down his throat; then tied
(Nor sought Martano with his foe to cope)
The caitiff's arms behind him with a rope.

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LXXXVI.

And, though she for excuse tried many wiles,
Did thus as well by Origilla untrue;
And till he reached Damascus' lofty piles,
Them by town, street, or farm, behind him drew:
And will a thousand times a thousand miles,
With sorrow and with suffering, drag the two,
Till he his brother find; who, at his pleasure,
May vengeance to the guilty couple measure.

LXXXVII.

Sir Aquilant made squires and beasts as well
Return with him, and to Damascus came;
And heard Renown, throughout the city, swell,
Plying her ample wings, Sir Gryphon's name.
Here, great and little—every one, could tell
'Twas he that in the tourney won such fame,
And had, by one that ill deserved his trust,
Been cheated of the honours of the just.

LXXXVIII.

Pointing him out to one anothor's sight,
The hostile people all Martano bayed;
"And is not this (they cried) that ribald wight
"Who in another's spoils himself arrayed,
"And who the valour of a sleeping knight,
"With his own shame and infamy o'erlaid?
"And this the woman of ungrateful mood,
"Who aids the wicked and betrays the good?"

LXXXIX.

Others exclaimed, "How fittingly combined,
"Marked with one stamp, and of one race are they!"
Some loudly cursed them, and some raved behind,
While others shouted, "Hang, burn, quarter, slay!"
The throng to view them prest, with fury blind,
And to the square before them made its way.
The monarch of the tidings was advised,
And these above another kingdom prized.

XC.

Attended with few squires the Syrian king,
As then he chanced to be, came forth with speed,
And with Sir Aquilant encountering,
Who Gryphon had avenged with worthy deed,
Him honoured with fair cheer, and home would bring,
And in his palace lodged, as fitting meed;
Having the prisoned pair, with his consent
First in the bottom of a turret pent.

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XCI.

They thither go, where Gryphon from his bed
Has not as yet, since he was wounded, stirred;
Who at his brother's coming waxes red,
Surmising well he of his case has heard:
And after Aquilant his say had said,
And him somedeal reproached, the three conferred
As to what penance to the wicked two,
So fallen into their hands, was justly due.

XCII.

'Tis Aquilant's, 'tis Norandino's will
A thousand tortures shall their guerdon be:
But Gryphon, who the dame *alone* can ill
Excuse, entreats for *both* impunity;
And many matters urges with much skill.
But well is answered; and 'tis ruled, to flea
Martano's body with the hangman's scourge,
And only short of death his penance urge.

XCIII.

Bound is the wretch, but not 'mid grass and flower,
Whose limbs beneath the hangman's lashes burn
All the next morn: they prison in the tower
Origilla, till Lucina shall return;
To whom the counselling lords reserve the power
To speak the woman's sentence, mild or stern.
Harboured, till Gryphon can bear arms, at court,
Aquilant fleets the time in fair disport.

XCIV.

The valiant Norandino could not choose
(Made by such error temperate and wise),
But full of penitence and sorrow, muse,
With downcast spirit, and in mournful guise,
On having bid his men a knight misuse,
Whom all should worthily reward and prize;
So that he, night and morning, in his thought,
How to content the injured warrior sought.

XCV.

And he determined, in the public sight
O' the city, guilty of that injury,
With all such honour as to perfect knight
Could by a puissant monarch rendered be,
Him with the glorious guerdon to requite,
Which had been ravished by such treachery:
And hence, within a month, proclaimed the intent
To hold another solemn tournament.

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XCVI.

For which he made what stately preparation
Was possible to make by sceptered king.
Hence Fame divulged the royal proclamation
Throughout all Syria's land, with nimble wing,
Phœnicia and Palestine; till the relation
Of this in good Astolpho's ears did ring;
Who, with the lord who ruled that land in trust,
Resolved he would be present at the joust.

XCVII.

For a renowned and valiant cavalier
Has the true history vaunted, Sansonnet,
By Roland christened, Charles (I said), the peer
Over the Holy Land as ruler set:
He with the duke * takes up his load, to steer
Thither, where Rumour speaks the champions met.
So that his ears, on all sides in the journey,
Are filled with tidings of Damascus' tourney.

XCVIII.

Thither the twain their way those countries through,
By easy stages and by slow, addrest,
That fresh upon the day of joust the two
Might in Damascus-town set up their rest.
When at the meeting of cross-ways they view
A person, who, in movement and in vest,
Appears to be a man, but is a maid;
And marvellously fierce, in martial raid.

XCIX.

Marphisa was the warlike virgin's name,
And such her worth, she oft with naked brand
Had pressed Orlando sore in martial game,
And him who had Mount Alban in command; †
And ever, night and day, the armed dame
Scowered, here and there, by hill and plain, the land;
Hoping with errant cavalier to meet,
And win immortal fame by glorious feat

C.

When Sansonnetto and the English knight
She sees approaching her, in warlike weed,
Who seem two valiant warriors in her sight,
As of large bone, and nerved for doughty deed,
On them she fain would prove her martial might,
And to defy the pair has moved her steed.
When, eyeing the two warriors, now more near,
Marphisa recognized the duke and peer.

* Astolpho. † Rinaldo.

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CI.

His pleasing ways she did in mind retrace,
When arms in far Catày with her he bore
Called him by name, nor would in iron case;
Retain her hand, upraised the casque she wore,
And him, advanced, to meet with glad embrace,
Though, of all living dames and those of yore,
The proudest, she; nor with less courteous mien
The paladin salutes the martial queen.

CII.

They questioned one another of their way;
And when the duke has said (who first replied)
"That he Damascus seeks, where to assay
"Their virtuous deeds, all knights of valour tried
"The Syrian king invites, in martial play,"—
The bold Marphisa, at this hearing, cried,
(Ever to prove her warlike prowess bent)
"I will be with you at this tournament."

CIII.

To have such a comrade either cavalier
Is much rejoiced. They to Damascus go,
And in a suburb, of the city clear,
Are lodged, upon the day before the show;
And, till her aged lover, once so dear,
Aurora roused, their humble roof below,
In greater ease the weary warriors rested
Than had they been in costly palace guested.

CIV.

And when the clear and lucid sun again
Its shining glories all abroad had spread,
The beauteous lady armed, and warriors twain,
Having first couriers to the city sped,
Who, when 'twas time, reported to the train,
That, to see truncheons split in contest dread,
King Norandine had come into the square
In which the cruel games appointed were.

CV.

Straight to the city ride the martial band,
And, through the high street, to the crowded place;
Where, waiting for the royal signal, stand,
Ranged here and there, the knights of gentle race.
The guerdons destined to the conqueror's hand,
In that day's tourney, were a tuck and mace
Richly adorned, and, with them, such a steed
As to the winning lord were fitting meed.

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CVI.

Norandine, sure that, in the martial game,
Both prizes destined for the conquering knight,
As well as one and the other tourney's fame,
Must be obtained by Gryphon, named the white,
To give him all that valiant man could claim,
Nor could he give the warrior less, with right,
The armour, guerdon of this final course
Placed with the tuck and mace and noble horse.

CVII.

The arms which in the former joust the due
Of valiant Gryphon were, who all had gained,
(With evil profit, by the wretch untrue,
Martan' usurped, who Gryphon's bearing feigned,)
To be hung up on high in public view
With the rich-flourished tuck, the king ordained,
And fastened at the saddle of the steed
The mace, that Gryphon might win either meed.

CVIII.

But from effecting what he had intended
He was prevented by the warlike maid;
Who late into the crowded square had wended,
With Sansonnet and England's duke arrayed.
Seeing the arms of which I spoke suspended,
She straight agnized the harness she surveyed,
Once hers, and dear to her; as matters are
Esteemed by us as excellent and rare;

CIX.

Though, as a hindrance, she upon the road
Had left the arms, when, to retrieve her sword,
She from her shoulders slipt the ponderous load,
And chased Brunello, worthy of the cord.
More to relate were labour ill bestowed,
I deem, nor further of the tale record.[7]
Enough for me, by you 'tis understood,
How here she found anew her armour good.

CX.

You shall take with you, when by manifest
And certain tokens they by her were known,
She, for no earthly thing, the iron vest
And weapons for a day would have foregone.
She thinks not if this mode or that be best
To have them, anxious to regain her own;
But t'wards the arms with hand extended hies,
And without more regard takes down the prize.

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CXI.

And throwing some on earth, it chanced that more
Than was her own she in her hurry took.
The Syrian king, who was offended sore,
Raised war against her with a single look.
For ill the wrong his angered people bore,
And, to avenge him, lance and faulchion shook;
Remembering not, on other day, how dear
They paid for scathing errant cavalier.

CXII.

No wishful child more joyfully, 'mid all
The flowers of spring-tide, yellow, blue, and red,
Finds itself, nor at concert or at ball
Dame beauteous and adorned, than 'mid the tread
Of warlike steeds, and din of arms, and fall
Of darts, and push of spears,—where blood is shed,
And death is dealt, in the tumultuous throng,—
She finds herself beyond all credence strong.

CXIII.

She spurred her courser, and with lance in rest,
Impetuous at the foolish rabble made,
And—through the neck impaled or through the breast,—
Some pierced, some prostrate at the encounter layed.
Next this or that she with the faulchion prest;
The head from one she severed with the blade,
And from that other cleft: another sank,
Short of right arm or left, or pierced in flank.

CXIV.

Bold Sansonnetto and Astolpho near,
Who had, with her, their limbs in harness dight,
Though they for other end in arms appear,
Seeing the maid and crowd engaged in fight,
First lower the helmet's vizor, next the spear,
And with their lances charge the mob outright:
Then bare their faulchions, and, amid the crew,
A passage with the trenchant weapons hew.

CXV.

The errant cavaliers who to that stage,
To joust, from different lands had made resort,
Seeing them warfare with such fury wage,
And into mourning changed the expected sport,
Because all knew not what had moved the rage
Of the infuriate people in that sort,
Nor what the insult offered to the king,
Suspended stood in doubt and wondering.

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CXVI.

Of *these*, some will the crowded rabble's band
(Too late repentant of the feat) befriend:
Those, favouring not the natives of the land
More than the foreigners, to part them wend.
Others more wary, with their reins in hand,
Sit watching how the mischief is to end.
Gryphon and Aquilant are of the throng,
Which hurry forward to avenge the wrong.

CXVII.

The pair of warlike brethren witnessing
The monarch's drunken eyes with venom fraught,
And having heard from many in the ring
The occasion which the furious strife had wrought,
Himself no whit less injured than the king
Of Syria's land, offended Gryphon thought.
Each knight, in haste, supplied himself with spear,
And thundering vengeance drove in full career.

CXVIII.

On Rabican, pricked forth before his band,
Valiant Astolpho, from the other bound,
With the enchanted lance of gold in hand,
Which at the first encounter bore to ground
What knights he smote with it; and on the sand
Laid Gryphon first; next Aquilant he found,
And scarcely touched the border of his shield,
Ere he reversed the warrior on the field.

CXIX.

From lofty saddle Sansonnet o'erthrew,
Famous for price and prowess, many a knight.
To the outlet of the square the mob withdrew;
The monarch raged with anger and despite.
Meanwhile, of the first cuirass and the new
Possest, as well as either helmet bright,
Marphisa, when she all in flight discerned,
Conqueror towards her suburb-inn returned.

CXX.

Sansonnet and Astolpho are not slow
In following t'wards the gate the martial maid,
(The mob dividing all to let them go)
And halt when they have reached the barricade.
Gryphon and Aquilant, who saw with woe
Themselves on earth at one encounter laid,
Their drooping heads, opprest with shame, decline,
Nor dare appear before King Norandine.

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CXXI.

Seizing their steeds and mounting, either son
Of Oliver to seek their foemen went:
With many of his vassals too is gone
The king; on death or vengeance all intent.
The foolish rabble cry, "Lay on, lay on,"
And stand at distance and await the event.
Gryphon arrived where the three friends had gained
A bridge, and facing round the post maintained.

CXXII.

He, at the first approach, Astolpho knew,
For still the same device had been his wear,
Even from the day he charmed Orrilo slew,
His horse, his arms the same: him not with care
Sir Gryphon had remarked, nor steadfast view,
When late he jousted with him in the square:
He knows him here and greets; next prays him show
Who the companions are that with him go;

CXXIII.

'And why they had those arms, without the fear
'Of Syria's king, pulled down, and to his slight.'
Of his companions England's cavalier,
Sir Gryphon, courteously informed aright.
'But little of those arms,' pursued the peer,
'He knew, which were the occasion of the fight;
'But (for he thither with Marphisa came
'And Sansonnet) had armed to aid the dame.'

CXXIV.

While he and Gryphon stood in colloquy,
Aquilant came, and knew Astolpho good,
Whom he heard speaking with his brother nigh,
And, though of evil purpose, changed his mood.
Of Norandine's trooped many, these to spy;
But came not nigh the warriors where they stood:
And seeing them in conference, stood clear,
Listening, in silence, and intent to hear.

CXXV.

Some one who hears Marphisa bold is there,
Famed, through the world, for matchless bravery,
His courser turns, and bids the king have care,
Save he would lose his Syrian chivalry,
To snatch his court, before all slaughtered are,
From the hand of Death and of Tisiphone:
For that 'twas verily Marphisa, who
Had borne away the arms in public view.

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CXXVI.

As Norandine is told that name of dread,
Through the Levant so feared on every side,
Whose mention made the hair on many a head
Bristle, though she was often distant wide,
He fears the ill may happen which is said,
Unless against the mischief he provide;
And hence his meiny, who have changed their ire
Already into fear, he bids retire.

CXXVII.

The sons of Oliver, on the other hand,
With Sansonnetto and the English knight,
So supplicate Marphisa, she her brand
Puts up, and terminates the cruel fight;
And to the monarch next, amid his band,
Cries, proudly, "Sir, I know not by what right
'Thou wouldst this armour, not thine own, present
"To him who conquers in thy tournament.

CXXVIII.

"Mine are these arms, which I, upon a day,
"Left on the road which leads from Armeny,
"Because, parforce a-foot, I sought to stay
"A robber, who had sore offended me.
"The truth of this my ensign may display,
"Which here is seen, if it be known to thee."
With that she on the plate which sheathed the breast
(Cleft in three places) showed a crown imprest.

CXXIX.

"To me this an Armenian merchant gave,
'"Tis true," replied the king, "some days ago:
"And had you raised your voice, the arms to crave,
"You should have had them, whether yours or no.
"For, notwithstanding I to Gryphon gave
"The armour, I so well his nature know,
"He freely would resign the gift he earned,
"That it by me to you might be returned.

CXXX.

"Your allegation needs not to persuade
"These arms are yours—that they your impress bear;
"Your word suffices me, by me more weighed
"Than all that other witness could declare.
"To grant them yours is but a tribute paid
"To Virtue, worthy better prize to wear.
"Now have the arms, and let us make accord;
"And let some fairer gift the knight reward."

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CXXXI.

Gryphon, who little had those arms at heart,
But much to satisfy the king was bent,
Replied: "You recompense enough impart,
"Teaching me how your wishes to content."
—"Here is my honour all at stake," apart,
"Me seemeth," said Marphisa, and forewent
Her claim for Gryphon's sake, with courteous cheer;
And, as his gift, in fine received the gear.

CXXXII.

To the city, their rejoicings to renew,
In love and peace they measured back their way.
Next came the joust, of which the honour due,
And prize was Sansonnet's; since from the fray
Abstained Astolpho and the brethren two,*
And bold Marphisa, best of that array,
Like faithful friends and good companions; fain
That Sansonnet the tourney's meed should gain.

CXXXIII.

Eight days or ten in joy and triumph dwell
The knights with Norandine: but with such strong
Desire of France the warriors' bosoms swell,
Which will not let them thence be absent long,
They take their leave. Marphisa, who as well
Thither would go, departs the troop among.
Marphisa had long time, with sword and lance,
Desired to prove the paladins of France;

CXXXIV.

And make experiment, if they indeed
Such worth as is by Rumour voiced display.
Sansonnet leaves another, in his stead,
The city of Jerusalem to sway,
And now these five, in chosen squadron, speed,
Who have few peers in prowess, on their way.
Dismissed by Norandine, to Tripoli
They wend, and to the neighbouring haven hie.

CXXXV.

And there a carack find, about to steer
For western countries, taking in her store:
They, with the patron, for themselves and gear,
And horses, make accord; a seaman hoar
Of Luna he:[s] the heavens, on all sides clear,
Vouch many days' fair-weather. From the shore
They loose, with sky serene, and every sail
Of the yare vessel stretched by favouring gale.

* Gryphon and Aquilant.

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CXXXVI.

The island of the amorous deity
Breathed upon them an air, in her first port,
Which not alone to man does injury,
But moulders iron; and here life is short;
—A marsh the cause,—and Nature certainly
Wrongs Famagosta, poisoning, in such sort,
That city with Constantia's fen malign,
To all the rest of Cyprus so benign.

CXXXVII.

The noxious scents that from the marish spring,
After short sojourn there, compel their flight.
The barque to a south-easter every wing
Extends, and circles Cyprus to the right,
Makes Paphos' island next, and, anchoring,
The crew and warriors on the beach alight;
Those to ship merchandize, and these, at leisure,
To view the laughing land of Love and Pleasure.

CXXXVIII.

Inland six miles or seven from thence, a way
Scales, with an easy rise, a pleasant hill;
Which myrtle, orange, cedar-tree, and bay,
And other perfumed plants by thousands fill;
Thyme, marjoram, crocus, rose, and lily gay
From odoriferous leaf such sweets distil,
That they who sail the sea the fragrance bland,
Scent in each genial gale which blows from land.

CXXXIX.

A fruitful rill, by limpid fountain fed,
Waters, all round about, the fertile space.
The land of Venus truly may be said
That passing joyous and delightful place:
For every maid and wife, who there is bred,
Is through the world beside, unmatched in grace:
And Venus wills, till their last hour be tolled,
That Love should warm their bosoms, young and old.

CXL.

'Twas here they heard the same which they before
Of the orc and of Lucina, erst had heard
In Syria; how she to return once more
In Nicosia, to her lord prepared.
Thence (a fair wind now blowing from the shore)
His bark for sea the ready Patron cleared,
Hauled up his anchor, westward turned the head
Of the good ship, and all his canvas spread.

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CXLI.

To the north wind, which blew upon their right,
Stretching to seaward, they their sails untie:
When lo! a south-south-wester, which seemed light,
In the beginning, while the sun was high,
And afterwards increased in force t'wards night,
Raised up the sea against them mountains high;
With such dread flashes, and loud peals of thunder,
As Heaven, to swallow all in fire, would sunder.

CXLII.

The clouds their gloomy veil above them strain,
Nor suffer sun or star to cheer the view.
Above the welkin roared, beneath the main:
On every side the wind and tempest grew;
Which, with sharp piercing cold and blinding rain,
Afflicted sore the miserable crew.
While aye descending night, with deeper shade,
The vext and fearful billows overlayed.

CXLIII.

The sailors, in this war of wind and flood,
Were prompt to manifest their vaunted art.
One blowing through the shrilling whistle stood,
And with the signal taught the rest their part.
One clears the best bower anchor: one is good
To lower,[10] this other to haul home or start
The braces; one from deck the lumber cast,
And this secured the tiller, that the mast.

CXLIV.

The cruel wind increased throughout the night,
Which grew more dismal and more dark than hell.
The wary Patron stood to sea outright,
Where he believed less broken was the swell;
And turned his prow to meet, with ready sleight,
The buffets of the dreadful waves which fell;
Never without some hope, that at day-break
The storm might lull, or else its fury slake.

CXLV.

It lulls not, nor its fury slakes, but grown
Wilder, shows worse by day,—if this be day,
Which but by reckoning of the hours is known,
And not by any cheering light or ray.
Now, with more fear (his weaker hope o'erthrown):
The sorrowing Patron to the wind gives way,
He veers his barque before the cruel gale,
And scours the foaming sea with humble sail.

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CXLVI.

While Fortune on the sea annoys this crew,
She grants those others small repose by land,
Those left in France, who one another slew,—
The men of England and the paynim band.
These bold Rinaldo broke and overthrew;
Nor troops nor banners spread before him stand:
I speak of him, who his Bayardo fleet
Had spurred the gallant Dardinel to meet.

CXLVII.

The shield, of which Almontes' son was vain,
That of the quarters, good Rinaldo spied;
And deemed him bold, and of a valiant strain,
Who with Orlando's ensign dared to ride.
Approaching nearer, this appeared more plain,
When heaps of slaughtered men he round him eyed.
"Better it were," he cried, "to overthrow
"This evil plant, before it shoot and grow."

CXLVIII.

Each to retreat betook him, where the peer
His face directed, and large passage made.
Nor less the Saracens than faithful, clear
The way, so reverenced is Fusberta's blade.
Save Dardinel, Mount Alban's cavalier,
Saw none, nor he to chase his prey delayed.
To whom, "He cast upon thee mickle care,
"Poor child, who of that buckler left thee heir.

CXLIX.

"I seek thee out to prove (if thou attend
"My coming) how thou keep'st the red and white,
"For thou, save this from me thou canst defend,
"Canst ill defend it from Orlando's might."
To him the king: "Now clearly comprehend
"I what I bear, as well defend in fight;
"And I more honour hope than trouble dread
"From my paternal quartering, white and red.

CL.

"Have thou no hope to make me fly, or yield
"To thee my quarters, though a child I be;
"My life shalt thou take from me, if my shield;
"But I, in God, well hope the contrary.
"—This as it may!—shall none, in fighting field,
"Say that I ever shamed my ancestry."
So said, and grasping in his hand the sword,
The youthful king assailed Mount Alban's lord.

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CLI.

Upon all parts, a freezing fear goes through
The heart-blood of each trembling paynim nigh,
When they amazed the fierce Rinaldo view;
Who charged the monarch with such enmity,
As might a lion, which a bullock, new
To stings of love, should in a meadow spy.
The Moor smote first, but fruitless was his task,
Who beat in vain upon Mambrino's casque.

CLII.

Rinaldo smiled, and said; "I'd have thee know
"If I am better skilled to find the vein."
He spurs, and lets with that the bridle go,
And a thrust pushes with such might and main,
—A thrust against the bosom of his foe,
That at his back the blade appears again.
Forth issued blood and soul, and from his sell
Lifeless and cold the reeling body fell.

CLIII.

As languishes the flower of purple hue,
Which levelled by the passing ploughshare lies;
Or as the poppy, overcharged with dew,
In garden droops its head in piteous wise;
From life the leader of Zumara's crew*
So past, his visage losing all its dyes:
So passed from life; and perished with their king,
The heart and hope of all his following.

CLIV.

As waters will sometime their course delay,
Stagnant, and penned in pool by human skill,
Which, when the opposing dyke is broke away,
Fall, and with mighty noise the country fill:
'Twas so the Africans, who had some stay,
While Dardinello valour did instil,
Fled here and there, dismayed on every side,
When they him hurtling from his sell descried.

CLV.

Letting the flyers fly, of those who stand
Firm in their place, Rinaldo breaks the array;
Ariödantes kills on every hand;
Who ranks well nigh Rinaldo on that day.
These Leonetto's, those Zerbino's brand
O'erturns, all rivals in the glorious fray.
Well Charles and Oliver their parts have done,
Turpin and Ogier, Guido and Salomon.

* Dardinello.

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CLVI.

In peril were the Moors, that none again
Should visit Heatheness, that day opprest:
But that the wise and wary king of Spain,
Gathered, and from the field bore off the rest:
To sit down with his loss he better gain
Esteemed, than here to hazard purse and vest:
Better some remnant of the host to save,
Than bid whole squadrons stand and find a grave.

CLVII.

He bids forthwith the Moorish ensigns be
Borne to the camp, which fosse and rampart span,
With the bold monarch of Andology,
The valiant Portuguese, and Stordilan.
He sends to pray the king of Barbary,*
To endeavour to retire, as best he can;
Who will no little praise that day deserve,
If he his person and his place preserve.

CLVIII.

That king, who deemed himself in desperate case,
Nor ever more Biserta hoped to see;
For, with so horrible and foul a face
He never Fortune had beheld, with glee
Heard that Marsilius had contrived to place
Part of his host in full security;
And faced about his banners and bade beat
Throughout his broken squadrons a retreat.

CLIX.

But the best portion neither signal knew,
Nor listened to the drum or trumpet's sound.
So scared, so crowded is the wretched crew,
That many in Seine's neighbouring stream are drowned.
Agramant, who would form the band anew,
(With him Sobrino) scours the squadrons round;
And with them every leader good combines
To bring the routed host within their lines.

CLX.

But nought by sovereign or Sobrino done,
Who, toiling, them with prayer or menace stirred,
To march, where their ill-followed flags are gone,
Can bring (I say not all) not even a third.
Slaughtered or put to flight are two for one
Who 'scapes,—nor he unharmed: among that herd,
Wounded is *this* behind, and *that* before,
And wearied, one and all, and harassed sore.

* Agramant.

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CLXI.

And even within their lines, in panic sore,
They by the Christian bands are held in chase;
And of all needful matters little store
Was made there, for provisioning the place.
Charlemagne wisely by the lock before
Would grapple Fortune, when she turned her face,
But that dark night upon the field descended,
And hushed all earthly matters and suspended:

CLXII.

By the Creator haply hastened, who
Was moved to pity for the works he made.
The blood in torrents ran the country through,
Flooding the roads; while on the champaign laid
Were eighty thousand of the paynim crew,
Cut off that day by the destroying blade:
Last trooped from caverns, at the midnight-hour,
Villain and wolf to spoil them and devour.

CLXIII.

King Charles returns no more within the town,
But camps without the city, opposite
The Moor's cantonments, and bids up and down,
And round, high-piled and frequent watch-fires light.
The paynim fashions ditch and bastion,
Rampart and mine, and all things requisite;
Visits his outposts, and his guards alarms,
Nor all the livelong night puts off his arms.

CLXIV.

That livelong night the foes, throughout their tents,
As insecure and with their scathe deprest,
Poured tears, and uttered murmurs and laments:
But, as they could, their sounds of woe supprest.
One grief for slaughtered friends or kindred vents:
Some are by sorrows of their own distrest,
As wounded or as ill at ease: but more
Tremble at mischief which they deem in store.

CLXV.

Two Moors amid the paynim army were,
From stock obscure in Ptolomita grown;
Of whom the story, an example rare
Of constant love, is worthy to be known:
Medoro and Cloridan were named the pair;
Who, whether Fortune pleased to smile or frown,
Served Dardinello with fidelity,
And late with him to France had crost the sea.

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CLXVI.

Of nimble frame and strong was Cloridane,
Throughout his life a follower of the chase.
A cheek of white, suffused with crimson grain,
Medoro had, in youth a pleasing grace.
Nor bound on that emprize, 'mid all the train,
Was there a fairer or more jocund face."
Crisp hair he had of gold, and jet black eyes:
And seemed an angel lighted from the skies.

CLXVII.

These two were posted on a rampart's height,
With more to guard the encampment from surprise,
When 'mid the equal intervals, at night,
Medoro gazed on heaven with sleepy eyes.
In all his talk, the stripling, woful wight,
Here cannot choose, but of his lord devise,
The royal Dardinel; and evermore
Him, left unhonoured on the field, deplore.

CLXVIII.

Then, turning to his mate, cries; "Cloridane,
"I cannot tell thee what a cause of woe
"It is to me, my lord upon the plain
"Should lie, unworthy food for wolf or crow!
"Thinking how still to me he was humane,
"Meseems, if in his honour I forego
"This life of mine, for favours so immense
"I shall but make a feeble recompense.

CLXIX.

"That he may lack not sepulture, will I
"Go forth, and seek him out among the slain;
"And haply God may will that none shall spy
"Where Charles's camp lies hushed. Do thou remain;
"That, if my death be written in the sky,
"Thou may'st the deed be able to explain.
"So that if Fortune foil so fair a feat,
"The world, through Fame, my loving heart may weet."

CLXX.

Amazed was Cloridan a child should show
Such heart, such love, and such fair loyalty;
And fain would make the youth his thought forego,
Whom he held passing dear; but fruitlessly
Would move his steadfast purpose; for such woe
Will neither comforted nor altered be.
Medoro is disposed to meet his doom,
Or to enclose his master in the tomb.

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CLXXI.

Seeing that nought would bend him, nought would move,
"I too will go," was Cloridan's reply,
"In such a glorious act myself will prove;
"As well such famous death I covet, I:
"What other thing is left me, here above,
"Deprived of thee, Medoro mine? To die
"With thee in arms is better, on the plain,
"Than afterwards of grief, should'st thou be slain."

CLXXII.

And thus resolved, disposing in their place
Their guard's relief, depart the youthful pair,
Leave fosse and palisade, and, in small space,
Are among ours, who watch with little care:
Who, for they little fear the paynim race,
Slumber with fires extinguished everywhere.
'Mid carriages and arms, they lie supine
Up to the eyes, immersed in sleep and wine.

CLXXIII.

A moment Cloridano stopt and cried;
"Not to be lost are opportunities.
"This troop, by whom my master's blood was shed,
"Medoro, ought not I to sacrifice?
"Do thou, lest any one this way be led,
"Watch everywhere about, with ears and eyes.
"For a wide way, amid the hostile horde,
"I offer here to make thee with my sword."

CLXXIV.

So said he, and his talk cut quickly short,
Coming where learned Alpheus slumbered nigh;
Who had the year before sought Charles's court,
In medicine, magic, and astrology
Well versed; but now in art found small support,
Or rather found that it was all a lie.
He had foreseen, that he his long-drawn life
Should finish in the bosom of his wife.

CLXXV.

And now the Saracen with wary view
Has pierced his weasand with the pointed sword.
Four others he, near that Diviner, slew,
Nor gave the wretches time to say a word.
Sir Turpin in his story tells not who,
And Time has of their names effaced record.
Palidon of Moncalier next he speeds;
One who securely sleeps between two steeds.

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CLXXVI.

Next came the warrior where, with limbs outspread,
Pillowed on barrel, lay the wretched Gryll:
This he had drained, and undisturbed by dread,
Hoped to enjoy a peaceful sleep and still.
The daring Saracen lopt off his head,
Blood issues from the tap-hole, with a rill
Of wine; and he, well drenched with many a can,
Dreams that he drinks, dispatched by Cloridan.

CLXXVII.

Next Gryll, Andropono and Conrad hight,
A Greek and German, at two thrusts he gored,
Who in the air had past large part of night
With dice and goblet; blest if at that board
They still had watched, till, clothed in amber light,
The radiant sun had traversed Indus' ford!
But mortals Destiny would set at nought
If every wight futurity were taught.

CLXXVIII.

As, in full fold, a lion long unfed,
Whom wasting famine has made lean and spare,
Devours and rends, and swallows, and lays dead
The feeble flock, which at his mercy are;
So, in their sleep, the cruel paynim bled
Our host, and made wide slaughter everywhere:
Nor blunted was the young Medoro's sword,
But he disdained to smite the ignoble horde.

CLXXIX.

He to Labretto's duke, leaving those dead,
Had come, who slumbered with a gentle mate,
Each clasping each so closely in their bed,
That air between them could not penetrate.
From both Medoro cleanly lopt the head
Oh! blessed way of death! oh! happy fate!
For 'tis my trust, that as their bodies, so
Their souls embracing to their bourne shall go.

CLXXX.

Malindo, with Andalico, he slew,
His brother, sons to the earl of Flanders they:
To whom as bearings (each to arms was new)
Charles had the lilies given; because that day
The monarch had beheld the valiant two
With crimsoned staves, returning from the fray;
And them with lands in Flanders vowed to glad;
And would, but that Medoro this forebad.

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CLXXXI.

Rearing the insidious blade, the pair are near
The place, where round King Charles' pavilion
Are tented warlike paladin and peer,
Guarding the side that each is camped upon.
When in good time the paynims backward steer,
And sheathe their swords, the impious slaughter done;
Deeming impossible, in such a number,
But they must light on one who does not slumber.

CLXXXII.

And though they might escape well charged with prey,
To save themselves they think sufficient gain.
Thither by what he deems the safest way
(Medoro following him) went Cloridane
Where, in the field, 'mid bow and faulchion, lay,
And shield and spear, in pool of purple stain,
Wealthy and poor, the king and vassal's corse,
And overthrown the rider and his horse.

CLXXXIII.

The horrid mixture of the bodies there
Which heaped the plain where roved these comrades sworn,
Might well have rendered vain their faithful care
Amid the mighty piles, till break of morn,
Had not the moon, at young Medoro's prayer.
Out of a gloomy cloud put forth her horn.
Medoro to the heavens upturns his eyes
Towards the moon, and thus devoutly cries:

CLXXXIV.

"O holy goddess! whom our fathers well
"Have styled as of a triple form, and who
"Thy sovereign beauty dost in heaven, and hell,
"And earth, in many forms reveal; and through
"The greenwood holt, of beast and monster fell,
"—A huntress bold—the flying steps pursue,
"Show where my king, amid so many lies,
"Who did, alive, thy holy studies prize."

CLXXXV.

At the youth's prayer from parted cloud outshone
(Were it the work of faith or accident)
The moon, as fair, as when Endymion
She circled in her naked arms: with tent,
Christian or Saracen, was Paris-town
Seen in that gleam, and hill and plain's extent.
With these Mount Martyr and Mount Lery's height,
This on the left, and that upon the right.[12]

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CLXXXVI.

The silvery splendour glistened yet more clear,
There where renowned Almontes' son lay dead.
Faithful Medoro mourned his master dear,
Who well agnized the quartering white and red,
With visage bathed in many a bitter tear
(For he a rill from either eyelid shed),
And piteous act and moan, that might have whist
The winds, his melancholy plaint to list;

CLXXXVII.

But with a voice suppress: not that he aught
Regards if any one the noise should hear,
Because he of his life takes any thought;
Of which loathed burden he would fain be clear;
But, lest his being heard should bring to nought
The pious purpose which has brought them here.
The youths the king upon their shoulders stowed;
And so between themselves divide the load.

CLXXXVIII.

Hurrying their steps, they hastened, as they might,
Under the cherished burden they conveyed;
And now approaching was the lord of light,
To sweep from heaven the stars, from earth the shade,
When good Zerbino, he, whose valiant sprite
Was ne'er in time of need by sleep down-weighed,
From chasing Moors all night, his homeward way
Was taking to the camp at dawn of day.

CLXXXIX.

He has with him some horsemen in his train,
That from afar the two companions spy.
Expecting thus some spoil or prize to gain,
They, every one, towards that quarter hie.
"Brother, behoves us," cried young Cloridane,
"To cast away the load we bear, and fly:
"For 'twere a foolish thought (might well be said)
"To lose *two* living men, to save *one* dead;"

CXC.

And dropt the burden, weening his Medore
Had done the same by it, upon his side:
But that poor boy, who loved his master more,
His shoulders to the weight, alone, applied;
Cloridan hurrying with all haste before,
Deeming him close behind him or beside;
Who, did he know his danger, him to save
A thousand deaths, instead of one, would brave.

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CXCI.

Those horsemen, with intent to make the two
Yield themselves prisoners to their band, or die,
Some here, some there, disperse the champaign through,
And every pass and outlet occupy.
The captain, little distant from his crew,
Is keener than the rest the chase to ply;
And, when he sees them hurrying in such guise,
Is certain that the twain are enemies.

CXCII.

Of old an ancient forest clothed that lair,
Of trees and underwood a tangled maze;
Of salvage beasts alone the wild repair,
And, like a labyrinth, full of narrow ways:
Here from the boughs such shelter hope the pair
As may conceal them well from hostile gaze.
But him I shall expect who loves the rhyme,
To listen to my tale some other time.

CANTO XIX.

ARGUMENT.

Medoro, by Angelica's quaint hand,
Is healed, and weds, and bears her to Catay.
At length Marphisa, with the chosen band,
After long suffering, makes Laiazzi's bay.
Guido the savage, bondsman in the land,
Which impious women rule with evil sway,
With bold Marphisa strives in single fight,
And lodges her and hers at fall of night.

I.

By whom he is beloved can no one know,
Who on the top of Fortune's wheel is seated;
Since he, by true and faithless friends, with show
Of equal faith, in glad estate is greeted.
But, should felicity be changed to woe,
The flattering multitude is turned and fleeted!
While he who loves his master from his heart,
Even after death performs his faithful part.

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II.

Were the heart seen as is the outward cheer,
He who at court is held in sovereign grace,
And he that to his lord is little dear,
With parts reversed, would fill each other's place;
The humble man the greater would appear,
And he, now first, be hindmost in the race.
But be Medoro's faithful story said,
The youth who loved his lord, alive or dead.

III.

The closest path, amid the forest gray,
To save himself, pursued the youth forlorn;
But all his schemes were marred by the delay
Of that sore weight upon his shoulders borne.
The place he knew not, and mistook the way,
And hid himself again in sheltering thorn.
Secure and distant was his mate, that through
The greenwood-shade with lighter shoulders flew.

IV.

So far was Cloridan advanced before,
He heard the boy no longer in the wind;
But when he marked the absence of Medore,
It seemed as if his heart was left behind.
"Ah! how was I so negligent," (the Moor
Exclaimed,) "so far beside myself, and blind,
"That I, Medoro, should without thee fare,
"Nor know when I deserted thee or where?"

V.

So saying, in the wood he disappears,
Plunging into the maze with hurried pace;
And thither, whence he lately issued, steers,
And, desperate, of death returns in trace.
Cries and the tread of steeds this while he hears,
And word and threat of foemen, as in chase;
Lastly Medoro by his voice is known,
Disarmed, on foot, 'mid many horse, alone.

VI.

A hundred horsemen who the youth surround,
Zerbino leads, and bids his followers seize
The stripling; like a top, the boy turns round
And keeps him as he can: among the trees,
Behind oak, elm, beech, ash, he takes his ground,
Nor from the cherished load his shoulders frees.
Wearied, at length, the burden he bestowed
Upon the grass, and stalked about his load.

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VII.

As in her rocky cavern the she-bear,
With whom close warfare Alpine hunters wage,
Uncertain hangs about her shaggy care,
And growls in mingled sound of love and rage.
To unsheath her claws, and blood her tushes bare,
Would natural hate and wrath the beast engage;
Love softens her, and bids from strife retire,
And for her offspring watch, amid her ire.

VIII.

Cloridan, who to aid him knows not how,
And with Medoro willingly would die,
But who would not for death this being forego,
Until more foes than one should lifeless lie,
Ambushed, his sharpest arrow to his bow
Fits, and directs it with so true an eye,
The feathered weapon bores a Scotchman's brain,
And lays the warrior dead upon the plain.

IX.

Together, all the others of the band
Turned thither, whence was shot the murderous reed;
Meanwhile he launched another from his stand,
That a new foe might by the weapon bleed,
Whom (while he made of *this* and *that* demand,
And loudly questioned who had done the deed)
The arrow reached—transfixed the wretch's throat,
And cut his question short in middle note.

X.

Zerbino, captain of those horse, no more
Can at the piteous sight his wrath refrain;
In furious heat. he springs upon Medore,
Exclaiming, "Thou of this shalt bear the pain."
One hand he in his locks of golden ore
Enwreaths, and drags him to himself amain;
But, as his eyes that beauteous face survey,
Takes pity on the boy, and does not slay.

XI.

To him the stripling turns, with suppliant cry,
And, "By thy God, sir knight," exclaims, "I pray,
"Be not so passing cruel, nor deny
"That I in earth my honoured king may lay:
"No other grace I supplicate, nor I
"This for the love of life, believe me, say.
"So much, no longer, space of life I crave,
"As may suffice to give my lord a grave.

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XII.

"And if you needs must feed the beast and bird,
"Like Theban Creon, let their worst be done!
"Upon these limbs; so that by me interred
"In earth be those of good Almontes' son."
Medoro thus his suit, with grace, preferred,
And words—to move a mountain; and so won
Upon Zerbino's mood, to kindness turned,
With love and pity he all over burned.

XIII.

This while, a churlish horseman of the band,
Who little deference for his lord confest,
His lance uplifting, wounded overhand
The unhappy suppliant in his dainty breast.
Zerbino, who the cruel action scanned,
Was deeply stirred, the rather that, opprest
And livid with the blow the churl had sped,
Medoro fell as he was wholly dead.

XIV.

So grieved Zerbino, with such wrath was stung,
"Not unavenged shalt thou remain," he cries;
Then full of evil will in fury sprung
Upon the author of the foul emprize.
But he his vantage marks, and, from among
The warriors, in a moment slips and flies.
Cloridan, who beholds the deed, at sight
Of young Medoro's fall, springs forth to fight;

XV.

And casts away his bow, and, 'mid the band
Of foemen, whirls his faulchion, in desire
Rather of death, than hoping that his hand
May snatch a vengeance equal to his ire.
Amid so many blades, he views the sand
Tinged with his blood, and ready to expire,
And feeling he the sword no more can guide,
Lets himself drop by his Medoro's side.

XVI.

The Scots pursue their chief, who pricks before,
Through the deep wood, inspired by high disdain,
When he has left the one and the other Moor,
This dead, *that* scarce alive, upon the plain.
There for a mighty space lay young Medore,
Spouting his life-blood from so large a vein,
He would have perished, but that thither made
A stranger, as it chanced, who lent him aid.

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XVII.

By chance arrived a damsel at the place,
Who was (though mean and rustic was her wear)
Of royal presence and of beauteous face,
And lofty manners, sagely debonair:
Her have I left unsung so long a space,
That you will hardly recognise the fair.
Angelica, in her (if known not) scan,
The lofty daughter'of Catay's great khan.

XVIII.

Angelica, when she had won again
The ring Brunello had from her conveyed,
So waxed in stubborn pride and haught disdain,
She seemed to scorn this ample world, and strayed
Alone, and held as cheap each living swain,
Although, amid the best, by Fame arrayed:
Nor brooked she to remember a galant
In Count Orlando or king Sacripant;

XIX.

And above every other deed repented,
That good Rinaldo she had loved of yore;
And that to look so low she had consented,
(As by such choice dishonoured) grieved her sore.
Love, hearing this, such arrogance resented,
And would the damsel's pride endure no more.
Where young Medoro lay he took his stand,
And waited her, with bow and shaft in hand.

XX.

When fair Angelica the stripling spies,
Nigh hurt to death in that disastrous fray,
Who for his king, that there unsheltered lies,
More sad than for his own misfortune lay,
She feels new pity in her bosom rise,
Which makes its entry in unwonted way.
Touched was her haughty heart, once hard and curst,
And more when he his piteous tale rehearsed.

XXI.

And calling back to memory her art,
For she in Ind had learned chirurgery,
(Since it appears such studies in that part
Worthy of praise and fame are held to be,
And, as an heirloom, sires to sons impart,
With little aid of books, the mystery)
Disposed herself to work with simples' juice,
Till she in him should healthier life produce;

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XXII.

And recollects a herb had caught her sight
In passing hither, on a pleasant plain.
What (whether dittany or pancy hight)
I know not; fraught with virtue to restrain
The crimson blood forth-welling, and of might
To sheathe each perilous and piercing pain,
She found it near, and having pulled the weed,
Returned to seek Medoro on the mead.

XXIII.

Returning, she upon a swain did light,
Who was on horseback passing through the wood.
Strayed from the lowing herd, the rustic wight
A heifer, missing for two days, pursued.
Him she with her conducted, where the might
Of the faint youth was ebbing with his blood:
Which had the ground about so deeply dyed,
Life was nigh wasted with the gushing tide.

XXIV.

Angelica alights upon the ground,
And he her rustic comrade, at her hest.
She hastened 'twixt two stones the herb to pound,
Then took it, and the healing juice exprest:
With this did she foment the stripling's wound,
And, even to the hips, his waist and breast;
And (with such virtue was the salve endued)
It stanched his life-blood, and his strength renewed;

XXV.

And into him infused such force again,
That he could mount the horse the swain conveyed:
But good Medoro would not leave the plain
Till he in earth had seen his master laid.
He, with the monarch, buried Cloridane,
And after followed whither pleased the maid,
Who was to stay with him, by pity led,
Beneath the courteous shepherd's humble shed.

XXVI.

Nor would the damsel quit the lowly pile
(So she esteemed the youth) till he was sound;
Such pity first she felt, when him erewhile
She saw outstretched and bleeding on the ground.
Touched by his mien and manners next, a file
She felt corrode her heart with secret wound;
She felt corrode her heart, and with desire,
By little and by little warmed, took fire.

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XXVII.

The shepherd dwelt, between two mountains hoar,
In goodly cabin, in the greenwood-shade,
With wife and children; in short time before,
The brent-new shed had builded in the glade.
Here of his griesly wound the youthful Moor
Was briefly healed by the Catayan maid;
But who in briefer space, a sorer smart
Than young Medoro's, suffered at her heart.

XXVIII.

A wound far wider and which deeper lies,
Now in her heart she feels, from viewless bow;
Which from the boy's fair hair and beauteous eyes
Had the winged archer dealt: a sudden glow
She feels, and still the flames increasing rise;
Yet less she heeds her own than other's woe:
—Heeds not herself, and only to content
The author of her cruel ill is bent.

XXIX.

Her ill but festered and increased the more
The stripling's wounds were seen to heal and close:
The youth grew lusty, while she suffered sore,
And, with new fever parched, now burnt, now froze:
From day to day in beauty waxed Medore:
She miserably wasted; like the snow's
Unseasonable flake, which melts away
Exposed, in sunny place, to scorching ray.

XXX.

She, if of vain desire she will not die,
Must help herself, nor yet delay the aid.
And she in truth, her will to satisfy,
Deemed 'twas no time to wait till she was prayed.
And next of shame renouncing every tie,
With tongue as bold as eyes, petition made,
And begged him, haply an unwitting foe,
To sheathe the suffering of that cruel blow.

XXXI.

O Count Orlando, O king of Circassy,
Say what your valour has availed to you!
Say what your honour boots, what goodly fee
Remunerates ye both, for service true!
Sirs, show me but a single courtesy,
With which she ever graced ye,—old or new,—
As some poor recompense, desert, or guerdon,
For having born so long so sore a burden!

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XXXII.

Oh! couldst thou yet again to life return,
How hard would this appear, O Agricane![3]
In that she whilom thee was wont to spurn,
With sharp repulse and insolent disdain.
O Ferraû, O ye thousand more, forlorn,
Unsung, who wrought a thousand feats in vain
For this ungrateful fair, what pain 'twould be
Could you within his arms the damsel see!

XXXIII.

To pluck, as yet untouched, the virgin rose,
Angelica permits the young Medore.
Was none so blest as in that garden's close
Yet to have set his venturous foot before.
They holy ceremonies interpose,
Somedeal to veil—to gild—the matter o'er.
Young Love was bridesman there the tie to bless,
And for brideswoman stood the shepherdess.

XXXIV.

In the low shed, with all solemnities,
The couple made their wedding as they might;
And there above a month, in tranquil guise,
The happy lovers rested in delight.
Save for the youth the lady has no eyes,
Nor with his looks can satisfy her sight.
Nor yet of hanging on his neck can tire,
Or feel she can content her fond desire.

XXXV.

The beauteous boy is with her, night and day
Does she untent herself, or keep the shed.
Morning or eve they to some meadow stray,
Now to this bank, and to that other led:
Haply, in cavern harboured, at mid-day,
Grateful as that to which Æneas fled
With Dido, when the tempest raged above,
The faithful witness to their secret love.

XXXVI.

Amid such pleasures, where, with tree o'ergrown,
Ran stream, or bubbling fountain's wave did spin,
On bark or rock, if yielding were the stone,
The knife was straight at work or ready pin.
And there, without, in thousand places lone,
And in as many places graved, within,
Medoro and Angelica were traced,
In divers cyphers quaintly interlaced.

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XXXVII.

When she believed they had prolonged their stay
More than enow, the damsel made design
In India to revisit her Cathy,
And with its crown Medoro's head entwine.
She had upon her wrist an armlet, gay
With costly gems, in witness and in sign
Of love to her by Count Orlando borne,
And which the damsel for long time had worn.

XXXVIII.

On Ziliantes, hid beneath the wave,
This Morgue bestowed;[4] and from captivity
The youth (restored to Monodante's grave,
His ancient sire, through Roland's chivalry)
To Roland in return the bracelet gave:
Roland, a lover, deigned the gorgeous fee
To wear, with the intention to convey
The present to his queen, of whom I say.

XXXIX.

No love which to the paladin she bears,
But that it costly is and wrought with care,
This to Angelica so much endears,
That never more esteemed was matter rare:
This she was suffered, in THE ISLE OF TEARS,
I know not by what privilege, to wear,
When, naked, to the whale exposed for food
By that inhospitable race and rude.

XL.

She, not possessing wherewithal to pay
The kindly couple's hospitality,
Served by them in their cabin, from the day
She there was lodged, with such fidelity,
Unfastened from her arm the bracelet gay,
And bade them keep it for her memory.
Departing hence the lovers climb the side
Of hills, which fertile France from Spain divide.

XLI.

Within Valencia or Barcelona's town
The couple thought a little to remain,
Until some goodly ship should make her boun
To loose for the Levant: as so the twain
Journey, beneath Gerona,—coming down
Those mountains—they behold the subject main;
And keeping on their left the beach below,
By beaten track to Barcelona go.

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XLII.

But, ere they there arrive, a crazed wight
They find, extended on the outer shore;
Who is bedaubed like swine, in filthy plight,
And smeared with mud, face, reins, and bosom o'er;
He comes upon them, as a dog in spite
Swiftly assails the stranger at the door;
And is about to do the lovers scorn.
But to the bold Marphisa I return—

XLIII.

Marphisa, Astolpho, Gryphon, Aquilant.
Of these and of the others will I tell:
Who, death before their eyes, the vext Levant
Traverse, and ill resist the boisterous swell.
While aye more passing proud and arrogant,
Waxes in rage and threat the tempest fell.
And now three days the angry gale has blown,
Nor signal of abatement yet has shown.

XLIV.

Waves lifted by the waxing tempest start
Castle and flooring, and, if yet there be
Aught standing left in any other part,
'Tis cut away and cast into the sea.
Here, pricking out their course upon the chart,
One by a lantern does his ministry,
Upon a sea-chest propt; another wight
Is busied in the well by torch's light.

XLV.

This one beneath the poop, beneath the prow
That other, stands to watch the ebbing sand;
And (each half-glass run out) returns to know
What way the ship has made, and towards what land.
Thence all to speak their different thoughts, below,
To midships make resort, with chart in hand;
There where the mariners, assembled all,
Are met in council, at the master's call.

XLVI.

One says; "Abreast of Limissò are we
"Among the shoals"—and by his reckoning, nigh
The rocks of Tripoli the bark must be,
Where shipwrecked, for the most part, vessels lie.
Another; "We are lost on Sataly,[8]
"Whose coast makes many patrons weep and sigh."
According to their judgment, all suggest
Their reasons, each with equal dread opprest.

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XLVII.

More spitefully the wind on the third day
Blows, and the sea more yeasty billows rears:
The fore-mast by the first is borne away,
The rudder by the last, with him who steers.
Better than steel that man will bide the assay,
—Of marble breast—who has not now his fears.
Marphisa, erst so confident 'mid harms,
Denied not but that day she felt alarms.

XLVIII.

A pilgrimage is vowed to Sinäi,
To Cyprus and Gallicia, and to Rome,
Ettino, and other place of sanctity,
If such is named, and to the holy tomb.
Meanwhile, above the sea and near the sky,
The bark is tost, with shattered plank and boom;
From which the crew had cut, in her distress,
The mizenmast, to make her labour less.

XLIX.

They bale and chest and all their heavy lumber
Cast overboard, from poop, and prow, and side
And every berth and cabin disencumber
Of merchandize, to feed the greedy tide.
Water to water others of the number
Rendered, by whom the spouting pumps were plied.
This in the hold bestirs himself, where'er
Planks opened by the beating sea appear.

L.

They in this trouble, in this woe, remained
For full four days; and helpless was their plight,
And a full victory the sea had gained,
If yet a little had endured its spite;
But them with hope of clearer sky sustained
The wished appearance of St. Elmo's light,
Which (every spar was gone) descending glowed
Upon a boat, which in the prow was stowed.[6]

LI.

When, flaming, they the beauteous light surveyed,
All those aboard kneeled down in humble guise,
And Heaven for peace and for smooth water prayed,
With trembling voices and with watery eyes.
Nor longer waxed the storm, which had dismayed,
Till then enduring in such cruel wise.
North-wester or cross-wind no longer reigns;
But tyrant of the sea the south remains.

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LII.

This on the sea remained so passing strong,
And from its sable mouth so fiercely blew,
And bore with it so swift a stream and strong
Of the vext waters, that it hurried through
Their tumbling waves the shattered bark along,
Faster than gentle falcon ever flew;
And sore the patron feared, to the world's brink
It would transport his bark, or wreck or sink.

LIII.

For this the master finds a remedy,
Who bids them cast out spars, and veer away
A line which holds this float, and as they flee,
So, by two-thirds, their furious course delay.
This counsel boots, and more the augury
From him whose lights upon the gunwale play.'
This saves the vessel, haply else undone;
And makes her through the sea securely run.

LIV.

They, driven on Syria, in Laiazzo's bay
A mighty city rise; so nigh at hand,
That they can from the vessel's deck survey
Two castles, which the port within command.
Pale turns the patron's visage with dismay,
When he perceives what is the neighbouring land,
Who will not to the port for shelter hie,
Nor yet can keep the open sea, nor fly.

LV.

They cannot fly, nor yet can keep the sea;
For mast and yards are gone, and by the stroke
Of the huge billows beating frequently,
Loosened is plank, and beam and timber broke:
And certain death to make the port would be,
Or to be doomed to a perpetual yoke.
For each is made a slave, or sentenced dead,
Thither by evil Chance or Error led.

LVI.

Sore dangerous 'twas to doubt; lest hostile band
Should sally from the puissant town in sight,
With armed barks, and upon theirs lay hand,
In evil case for sea, and worse for fight.
What time the patron knows not what command
To give, of him inquires the English knight, *
'What kept his mind suspended in that sort,
'And why at first he had not made the port.

* Astolpho.

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LVII.

To him relates the patron, 'how a crew
'Of murderous women tenanted that shore,
'Which, by their ancient law, enslaved or slew
'All those whom Fortune to this kingdom bore;
'And that *he* only could such lot eschew
'That in the lists ten champions overbore,
'And having this achieved, the following night
'In bed should with ten damsels take delight.

LVIII.

'And if he brings to end the former feat,
'But afterwards the next unfinished leaves,
'They kill him, and as slaves his following treat,
'Condemned to delve their land or keep their beeves.
'—If for the first and second labour meet—
'He liberty for all his band achieves,
'Not for himself; who there must stay and wed
'Ten wives by him selected for his bed.'

LIX.

So strange a custom of the neighbouring strand
Without a laugh Astolpho cannot hear;
Sansonet and Marphisa, near at hand,
Next Aquilant, and he, his brother dear,
Arrive: to them the patron who from land
Aye keeps aloof, explains the cause of fear,
And cries; "I liefer in the sea would choke,
"Than here of servitude endure the yoke."

LX.

The sailors by the patron's rede abide,
And all the passengers affrighted sore;
Save that Marphisa took the other side
With hers, who deemed that safer was the shore
Than sea, which raging round them, far and wide,
Than a hundred thousand swords dismayed them more.
Them little this, or other place alarms,
So that they have but power to wield their arms.

LXI.

The warriors are impatient all to land:
But boldest is of these the English peer;
Knowing how soon his horn will clear the strand,
When the scared foe its pealing sound shall hear.
To put into the neighbouring port this band
Desires, and are at strife with those who fear.
And they who are the strongest, in such sort
Compel the patron, that he makes the port.

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LXII.

Already when their bark was first espied
At sea, within the cruel city's view,
They had observed a galley, well supplied
With practised mariners and numerous crew
(While them uncertain counsels did divide)
Make for their wretched ship, the billows through:
Her lofty prow to their short stern and low
These lash, and into port the vessel tow.

LXIII.

They thitherward were worked with warp and oar,
Rather than with assistance of the sail;
Since to lay starboard course or larboard more,
No means were left them by the cruel gale.
Again their rugged rhind the champions wore,
Girding the faithful faulchion with the mail,
And with unceasing hope of comfort fed
Master and mariners opprest with dread.

LXIV.

Like a half-moon, projected from the beach,
More than four miles about, the city's port;
Six hundred paces deep; and crowning each
Horn of the circling haven, was a fort;
On every side, secure from storm or breach,
(Save only from the south), a safe resort.
In guise of theatre the town extended
About it, and a hill behind ascended.

LXV.

No sooner there the harboured ship was seen
(The news had spread already through the land)
Than thitherward, with martial garb and mien,
Six thousand women trooped, with bow in hand;
And, to remove all hope of flight, between
One castle and the other, drew a band;
And with strong chains and barks the port enclosed;
Which ever, for that use, they kept disposed.

LXVI.

A dame, as the Cumean sybil gray,
Or Hector's ancient mother of renown,
Made call the patron out, and bade him say,
'If they their lives were willing to lay down;
'Or were content beneath the yoke to stay,
'According to the custom of the town.
—'One of two evils they must choose,—be slain,
'Or captives, one and all, must there remain.'

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LXVII.

"'Tis true, if one so bold and of such might
"Be found amid your crew," (the matron said),
"That he ten men of ours engage in fight,
"And can in cruel battle lay them dead,
"And, after, with ten women, in one night,
"Suffice to play the husband's part in bed,
"He shall remain our sovereign, and shall sway
"The land, and you may homeward wend your way.

LXVIII.

"And at *your* choice to stay shall also be,
"Whether a part or all, but with this pact,
"That he who here would stay and would be free,
"Can with ten dames the husband's part enact.
"But if your chosen warrior fall or flee,
"By his ten enemies at once attacked,
"Or for the second function have not breath,
"To slavery you we doom, and him to death."

LXIX.

At what she deemed the cavaliers would start,
The beldam found them bold; for to compete
With those they should engage, and play their part
The champions hoped alike in either feat.
Nor failed renowned Marphisa's valiant heart,
Albeit for the second dance unmeet;
Secure, where nature had her aid denied,
The want should with the faulchion be supplied.

LXX.

The patron is commanded their reply
Resolved in common council to unfold;
'The dames at pleasure may their prowess try,
'And shall in lists and bed allow them bold.'
The lashings from the vessels they untie,
The skipper heaves the warp, and bids lay hold,
And lowers the bridge; o'er which, in warlike weed,
The expectant cavaliers their coursers lead.

LXXI.

These through the middle of the city go,
And see the damsels, as they forward fare,
Ride through the streets, succinct, in haughty show,
And arm, in guise of warriors, in the square.
Nor to gird sword, nor fasten spur below,
Is man allowed, nor any arm to wear;
Excepting, as I said, the ten; to follow
The ancient usage which those women hallow.

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Orlando uprooting the Pine.

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LXXII.

All others of the manly sex they seat,
To ply the distaff, broider, card and sow,
In female gown descending to the feet,
Which renders them effeminate and slow;
Some chained, another labour to complete,
Are tasked, to keep their cattle, or to plough.
Few are the males; and scarce the warriors ken,
Amid a thousand dames, a hundred men.

LXXIII.

The knights determining by lot to try
Who in their common cause, on listed ground,
Should slay the ten, with whom they were to vie,
And in the other field ten others wound,
Designed to pass the bold Marphisa by,
Believing she unfitting would be found;
And would be, in the second joust at eve,
Ill-qualified the victory to achieve.

LXXIV.

But with the others she, the martial maid,
Will run her risk; and 'tis her destiny.
"I will lay down this life," the damsel said,
"Rather than you lay down your liberty.
"But *this*"—with that she pointed to the blade
Which she had girt—"is your security,
"I will all tangles in such manner loose,
"As Alexander did the Gordian noose.

LXXV.

"I will not henceforth stranger shall complain,
"So long as the world lasts, of this repair."
So said the maid, nor could the friendly train
Take from her what had fallen to her share.
Then,—either every thing to lose, or gain
Their liberty,—to her they leave the care.
With stubborn plate and mail all over steeled,
Ready for cruel fight, she takes the field.

LXXVI.

High up the spacious city is a place,
With steps, which serve as seats in rising rows;
Which for nought else is used, except the chase,
Tourney, or wrestling match, or such-like shows.
Four gates of solid bronze secure the space.
Thither of armed dames the rabble flows
In troubled tide; and to Marphisa told,
That she may enter, afterwards is told.

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LXXVII.

On pieballed horse Marphisa entered,—spread;
Were circles dappling all about his hair,—
Of a bold countenance and little head,
And beauteous points, and haughty gait and air.
Out of a thousand coursers which he fed,
Him, as the best, and biggest, and most rare,
King Norandino chose, and decked with brave
And costly trappings, to Marphisa gave.

LXXVIII.

Through the south gate, from the mid-day, the plain
Marphisa entered, nor expected long,
Before she heard approaching trumpet-strain
Peal through the lists in shrilling notes and strong;
And, looking next towards the northern wain,
Saw her ten opposites appear: among
These, as their leader, pricked a cavalier,
Excelling all the rest in goodly cheer.

LXXIX.

On a large courser came the leading foe,
Which was, excepting the near foot behind
And forehead, darker than was ever crow:
His foot and forehead with some white were signed.
The horseman did his horse's colours show
In his own dress; and hence might be divined,
He, as the mournful hue o'erpowered the clear,
Was less inclined to smile, than mournful tear.

LXXX.

At once their spears in rest nine warriors laid,
When the trump sounded, in the hostile train.
But he in black no sign of jousting made,
As if he held such vantage in disdain:
Better he deemed the law were disobeyed,
Than that his courtesy should suffer stain.
The knight retires apart, and sits to view
What against nine one single lance can do.

LXXXI.

Of smooth and balanced pace, the damsel's horse
To the encounter her with swiftness bore;
Who poised a lance so massive in the course,
It would have been an overweight for four.
She, disembarking, as of greatest force,
The boom had chosen out of many more.
At her fierce semblance when in motion, quail
A thousand hearts, a thousand looks grow pale.

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LXXXII.

The bosom of the first she opens so,
As might surprise, if naked were the breast:
She pierced the cuirass and the mail below;
But first a buckler, solid and well prest.
A yard behind the shoulders of the foe
Was seen the steel, so well was it addrest.
Speared on her lance she left him on the plain,
And at the others drove with flowing rein;

LXXXIII.

And so she shocked the second of the crew,
And dealt the third so terrible a blow,
From sell and life, with broken spine, the two
She drove at once. So fell the overthrow,
And with such weight she charged the warriors through!
So serried was the battle of the foe!—
I have seen bombard open in such mode
The squadrons, as that band Marphisa strowed.

LXXXIV.

Many good spears were broken on the dame,
Who was as little moved as solid wall,
When revellers play the chase's merry game,[8]
Is ever moved by stroke of heavy ball.
So hard the temper of her corslet's mail,
The strokes aye harmless on the breast-plate fall,
Whose steel was heated in the fires of hell,
And in Avernus' water slaked by spell.

LXXXV.

At the end of the career, she checked her steed,
Wheeled him about, and for a little stayed;
And then against the others drove at speed,
Broke them, and to the handle dyed her blade.
Here shorn of arms, and *there* of head, they bleed;
And other in such manner cleft the maid,
That breast, and head, and arms together fell,
Belly and legs remaining in the sell.

LXXXVI.

With such just measure him she cleaves, I say,
Where the two haunches and the ribs confine:
And leaves him a half figure, in such way
As what we before images divine,
Of silver, oftener made of wax, survey;
Which supplicants from far and near enshrine,
In thanks for mercy shown, and to bestow
A pious quittance for accepted vow.

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LXXXVII.

Marphisa next made after one that flew,
And overtook the wretch, and cleft (before
He the mid-square had won) his collar through,
So clean, no surgeon ever pieced it more.
One after other, all in fine she slew,
Or wounded every one she smote so sore,
She was secure, that never more would foe
Arise anew from earth, to work her woe.

LXXXVIII.

The cavalier this while had stood aside,
Who had the ten conducted to the place,
Since, with so many against one to ride,
Had seemed to him advantage foul and base;
Who, now he by a single hand espied
So speedily his whole array displaced,
Pricked forth against the martial maid, to show
'Twas courtesy, not fear had made him slow.

LXXXIX.

He signing with his right hand, made appear
That he would speak ere their career was run,
Nor thinking that beneath such manly cheer
A gentle virgin was concealed, begun:
"I wot thou needs must be, sir cavalier,
"Sore wearied with such mighty slaughter done;
"And if I were disposed to weary thee
"More than thou art, it were discourtesy.

XC.

"To thee, to rest until to-morrow's light,
"Then to renew the battle, I concede.
"No honour 'twere to-day to prove my might
"On thee, whom weak and overwrought I read."
—"Arms are not new to me, nor listed fight;
"Nor does fatigue so short a toil succeed,"
Answered Marphisa, "And I, at my post,
"Hope to prove this upon thee, to thy cost.

XCI.

"I thank thee for thy offer of delay,
"But need not what thy courtesy agrees;
"And yet remains so large a space of day
"'Twere very shame to spend it all in ease."
—"Oh! were I (he replied) so sure to appay
"My heart with everything which best would please,
"As thine I shall appay in this!—but see,
"That ere thou thinkest, daylight fail not thee."

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XCII.

So said he; and obedient to his hest
Two spears, say rather heavy booms, they bear.
He to Marphisa bids consign the best,
And the other takes himself: the martial pair
Already, with their lances in the rest,
Wait but till other blast the joust declare.
Lo! earth and air and sea the noise rebound,
As they prick forth, at the first trumpet's sound!

XCIII.

No mouth was opened and no eyelid fell,
Nor breath was drawn, amid the observant crew:
So sore intent was every one to spell
Which should be conqueror of the warlike two.
Marphisa the black champion from his sell,
So to o'erthrow he shall not rise anew,
Levels her lance; and the black champion, bent
To slay Marphisa, spurs with like intent.

XCIV.

Both lances, made of willow thin and dry,
Rather than stout and stubborn oak, appeared;
So splintered even to the rest, they fly:
While with such force the encountering steeds careered,
It seemed, as with a scythe-blade equally
The hams of either courser had been sheared.
Alike both fall; but voiding quick the seat,
The nimble riders start upon their feet.

XCV.

Marphisa in her life, with certain wound,
A thousand cavaliers on earth had laid;
And never had herself been borne to ground;
Yet quitted now the saddle, as was said.
Not only at the accident astound,
But nigh beside herself, remained the maid.
Strange to the sable cavalier withal,
Unwont to be unhorsed, appeared his fall.

XCVI.

They scarcely touch the ground before they gain
Their feet, and now the fierce assault renew,
With cut and thrust; which now with shield the twain
Or blade ward off, and now by leaps eschew.
Whether the foes strike home, or smite in vain,
Blows ring, and echo parted æther through.
More force those shields, those helms, those breastplates show
Than anvils underneath the sounding blow.

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XCVII.

If heavy falls the savage damsel's blade,
That falls not lightly of her warlike foe.
Equal the measure one the other paid;
And both receive as much as they bestow.
He who would see two daring spirits weighed,
To seek two fiercer need no further go.
Nor to seek more dexterity or might;
For greater could not be in mortal wight.

XCVIII.

The women who have sate long time, to view
The champions with such horrid strokes offend,
Nor sign of trouble in the warriors true
Behold, nor yet of weariness, commend
Them with just praises, as the worthiest two
That are, where'er the sea's wide arms extend.
They deem these of mere toil and labour long
Must die, save they be strongest of the strong.

XCIX.

Communing with herself, Marphisa said,
"That he moved not before was well for me!
"Who risked to have been numbered with the dead,
"If he at first had joined his company.
"Since, as it is, I hardly can make head
"Against his deadly blows." This colloquy
She with herself maintained, and while she spoke,
Ceased not to ply her sword with circling stroke.

C.

"'Twas well for me," the other cried again,
"That to repose I did not leave the knight.
"I now from him defend myself with pain,
"Who is o'erwearied with the former fight:
"What had he been, renewed in might and main,
"If he had rested till to-morrow's light?
"Right fortunate was I, as man could be,
"That he refused my proffered courtesy!"

CI.

Till eve they strove, nor did it yet appear
Which had the vantage of the doubtful fray:
Nor, without light, could either foe see clear
How to avoid the furious blows: when day
Was done, again the courteous cavalier
To his illustrious opposite 'gan say;
"What shall we do, since ill-timed shades descend,
"While we with equal fortune thus contend?"

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CII.

"Meseems, at least, that till to-morrow's morn
"'Twere better thou prolonged thy life: no right
"Have I thy doom, sir warrior, to adjourn
"Beyond the limits of one little night.
"Nor will I that by me the blame be borne
"That thou no longer shalt enjoy the light.
"With reason to the sex's charge, by whom
"This place is governed, lay thy cruel doom."

CIII.

"If I lament thee and thy company,
"He knows, by whom all hidden things are spied.
"Thou and thy comrades may repose with me,
"For whom there is no safe abode beside:
"Since leagued against you in conspiracy
"Are all whose husbands by thy hand have died.
"For every valiant warrior of the men
"Slain in the tourney, consort was of ten.

CIV.

"The scathe they have to-day received from thee,
"Would ninety women wreak with vengeful spite;
"And, save thou take my hospitality,
"Expect by them to be assailed this night."
—"I take thy proffer in security,"
(Replied Marphisa), "that the faith so plight,
"And goodness of thy heart, will prove no less,
"Than are thy corporal strength and hardiness.

CV.

"But if, as having to kill me, thou grieve,
"Thou well mayst grieve, for reasons opposite;
"Nor hast thou cause to laugh, as I conceive,
"Nor hitherto hast found me worst in fight.
"Whether thou wouldst defer the fray, or leave,
"Or prosecute by this or other light,
"Behold me prompt thy wishes to fulfil;
"Where and whenever it shall be thy will!"

CVI.

So by consent the combatants divided,
Till the dawn broke from Ganges' stream anew;
And so remained the question undecided,
Which was the better champion of the two.
To both the brothers * and the rest who sided
Upon that part, the liberal lord did sue
With courteous prayer, that till the coming day
They would be pleased beneath his roof to stay.

* Gryphon and Aquilant.

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CVII.

They unsuspecting with the prayer complied,
And by the cheerful blaze of torches white
A royal dome ascended, with their guide,
Divided into many bowers and bright.
The combatants remain as stupified,
On lifting up their vizors, at the sight
One of the other; for (by what appears)
The warrior hardly numbers eighteen years.

CVIII.

Much marvels with herself the gentle dame,
That one so young so well should do and dare.
Much marvels *he* (his wonderment the same)
When he her sex agnizes by her hair.
Questioning one another of their name,
As speedily reply the youthful pair.
But how was hight the youthful cavalier,
Await till the ensuing strain to hear.

CANTO XX.

ARGUMENT.

Guido and his from that foul haunt retire,
While all Astolpho chases with his horn,
Who to all quarters of the town sets fire,
Then roving singly round the world is borne.
Marphisa, for Gabrina's cause, in ire
Puts upon young Zerbino scathe and scorn,
And makes him guardian of Gabrina fell,
From whom he first learns news of Isabel.

I.

Great feats the women of antiquity
In arms and hallowed arts as well have done,
And of their worthy works the memory
And lustre through this ample world has shone.
Praised is Camilla, with Harpalicé,
For the fair course which they in battle run.
Corinna and Sappho, famous for their lore,
Shine two illustrious lights, to set no more.

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II.

Women have reached the pinnacle of glory,
In every art by them professed, well seen;
And whosoever turns the leaf of story,
Finds record of them, neither dim nor mean.
The evil influence will be transitory,
If long deprived of such the world has been;
And envious men, and those that never knew
Their worth, have haply hid their honours due.

III.

To me it plainly seems, in this our age
Of women such is the celebrity,
That it may furnish matter to the page,
Whence this dispersed to future years shall be;
And you, ye evil tongues which foully rage,
Be tied to your eternal infamy,
And women's praises so resplendent show,
They shall, by much, Marphisa's worth outgo.

IV.

To her returning yet again; the dame
To him who shewed to her such courteous lore,
Refused not to disclose her martial name,
Since he agreed to tell the style he bore.
She quickly satisfied the warrior's claim;
To learn his title she desired so sore.
"I am Marphisa," the virago cried:
All else was known, as bruited far and wide.

V.

The other, since 'twas his to speak, begun
With longer preamble: "Amid your train,
"Sirs, it is my belief that there is none
"But has heard mention of my race and strain.
"Not Pontus, Æthiopia, Ind alone,
"With all their neighbouring realms, but France and Spain
"Wot well of Clermont, from whose loins the knight
"Issued who killed Almontes bold in fight,

VI.

"And Chiarêillo and Mambrino slew,
"And sacked the realm whose royal crown they wore.
"Come of this blood, where Danube's waters, through
"Eight horns or ten to meet the Euxine pour,
"Me to the far-renowned Duke Aymon, who
"Thither a stranger roved, my mother bore.
"And 'tis a twelvemonth now since her, in quest
"Of my French kin, I left with grief opprest;

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VII.

"But reached not France, for southern tempest's spite
"Impelled me hither; lodged in royal bower
"Ten months or more; for—miserable wight!—
"I reckon every day and every hour.
"Guido the Savage I by name am hight,
"Ill known and scarcely proved in warlike stower.
"Here Argilon of Melibœa I
"Slew with ten warriors in his company.

VIII.

"Conqueror as well in other field confessed,
"Ten ladies are the partners of my bed:
"Selected at my choice, who are the best
"And fairest damsels in this kingdom bred:
"These I command, as well as all the rest,
"Who of their female band have made me head;
"And so would make another who in fight,
"Like me, ten opposites to death would smite."

IX.

Sir Guido is besought of them to say
Why there appear so few of the male race,
And to declare if women there bear sway
O'er men, as men o'er them in other place.
He; "Since my fortune has been here to stay,
"I oftentimes have heard relate the case;
"And now (according to the story told)
"Will, since it pleases you, the cause unfold.

X.

"When, after twenty years, the Grecian host
"Returned from Troy[2] (ten years hostility
"The town endured, ten weary years were tost
"The Greeks, detained by adverse winds at sea),
"They found their women had, for comforts lost,
"And pangs of absence, learned a remedy;
"And, that they might not freeze alone in bed,
"Chosen young lovers in their husbands' stead.

XI.

"With others' children filled the Grecian crew
"Their houses found, and by consent was past
"A pardon to their women; for they knew
"How ill they could endure so long a fast.
"But the adulterous issue, as their due,
"To seek their fortunes on the world were cast:
"Because the husbands would not suffer more
"The striplings should be nourished from their store.

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XII.

"Some are exposed, and others underhand
"Their kindly mothers shelter and maintain:
"While the adults, in many a various band,
"Some here, some there dispersed, their living gain.
"Arms are the trade of some, by some are scanned
"Letters and arts; another tills the plain:
"One serves in court, by other guided go
"The herd as pleases her who rules below.

XIII.

"A boy departed with these youthful peers,
"Who was of cruel Clytemnestra born;
"Like lily fresh (he numbered eighteen years)
"Or blooming rose, new-gathered from the thorn.
"He having armed a bark, his pinnace steers
"In search of plunder, o'er the billows borne.
"With him a hundred other youths engage,
"Picked from all Greece, and of their leader's age.

XIV.

"The Cretans, who had banished in that day
"Idomeneus, the tyrant of their land,
"And their new state to strengthen and upstay,
"Were gathering arms and levying martial band,
"Phalantus' service by their goodly pay
"Purchased (so hight the youth who sought that strand),
"And all those others that his fortune run,
"Who the Dictæan city garrison.

XV.

"Amid the hundred cities of old Crete,
"Was the Dictæan the most rich and bright;
"Of fair and amorous dames the joyous seat,
"Joyous with festive sports from morn to night:
"And (as her townsmen aye were wont to greet
"The stranger) with such hospitable rite
"They welcomed these, it little lacked but they
"Granted them o'er their households sovereign sway.

XVI.

"Youthful and passing fair were all the crew,
"The flower of Greece, whom bold Phalantus led;
"So that with those fair ladies at first view,
"Stealing their hearts, full well the striplings sped.
"Since, fair in deed as show, they good and true
"Lovers evinced themselves and bold in bed.
"And in few days to them so grateful proved,
"Above all dearest things they were beloved.

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XVII.

" After the war was ended on accord,
" For which were hired Phalantus and his train,
" And pay withdrawn, nor longer by the sword
" Was aught which the adventurous youth can gain,
" And they, for this, anew would go abroad,
" The unhappy Cretan women more complain,
" And fuller tears on this occasion shed,
" Than if their fathers lay before them dead.

XVIII.

" Long time and sorely all the striplings bold
" Were, each apart, by them implored to stay:
" Who since the fleeting youths they cannot hold,
" Leave brother, sire, and son, with these to stray,
" Of jewels and of weighty sums of gold
" Spoiling their households ere they wend their way.
" For so well was the plot concealed, no wight
" Throughout all Crete was privy to their flight.

XIX.

" So happy was the hour, so fair the wind,
" When young Phalantus chose his time to flee,
" They many miles had left the isle behind,
" Ere Crete lamented her calamity.
" Next, uninhabited by human kind,
" This shore received them wandering o'er the sea.
" 'Twas here they settled, with the plunder reft,
" And better weighed the issue of their theft.

XX.

" With amorous pleasures teemed this place of rest,
" For ten days, to that roving company:
" But, as oft happens that in youthful breast
" Abundance brings with it satiety,
" To quit their women, with one wish possest,
" The band resolved to win their liberty;
" For never burden does so sore oppress
" As woman, when her love breeds weariness.

XXI.

" They, who are covetous of spoil and gain,
" And ill-bested withal in stipend, know
" That better means are wanted to maintain
" So many paramours, than shaft and bow;
" And leaving thus alone the wretched train,
" Thence, with their riches charged the adventurers go
" For Puglia's pleasant land: there founded near
" The sea, Tarentum's city, as I hear.

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XXII.

"The women when they find themselves betrayed
"Of lovers by whose faith they set most store,
"For many days remain so sore dismayed,
"That they seem lifeless statues on the shore.
"But seeing lamentations nothing aid,
"And fruitless are the many tears they pour,
"Begin to meditate, amid their pains,
"What remedy for such an ill remains.

XXIII.

"Some laying their opinions now before
"The others, deem, 'that to return to Crete
'Is in their sad estate the wiser lore,
'Throwing themselves at sire and husband's feet,
'Than in those wilds, and on that desert shore,
'To pine of want.' Another troop repeat,
'They should esteem it were a worthier notion
'To cast themselves into the neighbouring ocean;

XXIV.

'And lighter ill, if they as harlots went
'About the world,—beggars or slaves to be,
'Than offer up themselves for punishment,
'Well merited by their iniquity.'
"Such and like schemes the unhappy dames present,
"Each harder than the other. Finally,
"One Orontea amid these upstood,
"Who drew her origin from Minos' blood.

XXV.

"Youngest and fairest of the crew betrayed
"She was, and wariest, and who least had erred,
"Who to Phalantus' arms had come a maid,
"And left for him her father: she in word,
"As well as in a kindling face, displayed
"How much with generous wrath her heart was stirred;
"Then, reprobating all advised before,
"Spake; and adopted saw her better lore.

XXVI.

'She would not leave the land they were upon,
'Whose soil was fruitful, and whose air was sane,
'Throughout which many limpid rivers ran,
'Shaded with woods, and for the most part plain;
'With creek and port, where stranger bark could shun
'Foul wind or storm, which vexed the neighbouring main,
'That might from Afric or from Egypt bring
'Victual or other necessary thing.

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XXVII.

'For vengeance (she opined) they there should stay
'Upon man's sex, which had so sore offended.
'She willed each bark and crew which to that bay
'For shelter from the angry tempest wended,
'They should, without remorse, burn, sack, and slay,
'Nor mercy be to any one extended.'
"Such was the lady's motion, such the course
"Adopted; and the statute put in force.

XXVIII.

"The women, when they see the changing heaven
"Turbid with tempest, hurry to the strand,
"With savage Orontea, by whom given
"Was the fell law, the ruler of the land;
"And of all barks into their haven driven
"Make havoc dread with fire and murderous brand,
"Leaving no man alive, who may diffuse
"Upon this side or that the dismal news.

XXIX.

"'Twas thus with the male sex at enmity,
"Some years the lonely women lived forlorn:
"Then found that hurtful to themselves would be
"The scheme, save changed; for if from them were born
"None to perpetuate their empery,
"The idle law would soon be held in scorn,
"And fail together with the unfruitful reign,
"Which they had hoped eternal should remain.

XXX.

"So that some deal its rigour they allay,
"And in four years, of all who made repair
"Thither, by chance conducted to this bay,
"Chose out ten vigorous cavaliers and fair;
"That for endurance in the amorous play
"Against those hundred dames good champions were:
"A hundred they; and, of the chosen men,
"A husband was assigned to every ten.

XXXI.

"Ere this, too feeble to abide the test,
"Many a one on scaffold lost his head.
"Now these ten warriors so approved the best,
"Were made partakers of their rule and bed;
"First swearing at the sovereign ladies' hest,
'That they, if others to that port are led,
'No mercy shall to any one afford,
'But one and all will put them to the sword.'

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XXXII.

"To swell, and next to child, and thence to fear,
"The women turned to teeming wives, began,
"Lest they in time so many males should bear
"As might invade the sovereignty they plan,
"And that the government they hold so dear
"Might finally from them revert to man.
"And so, while these are children yet, take measure,
"They never shall rebel against their pleasure.

XXXIII.

"That the male sex may not usurp the sway,
"It is enacted by the statute fell,
'Each mother should one boy preserve, and slay
'The others, or abroad exchange or sell.
'For this, they these to various parts convey,
'And to the bearers of the children tell,
'To truck the girls for boys in foreign lands,
'Or not, at least, return with empty hands.'

XXXIV.

"Nor by the women one preserved would be,
"If they without them could the race maintain.
"Such all their mercy, all the clemency
"The law accords for *theirs*, not *others'* gain.
"The dames all others sentence equally;
"And temper but in this their statute's pain,
"That, not as was their former practice, they
"All in their rage promiscuously slay.

XXXV.

"Did ten or twenty persons, or yet more,
"Arrive, they were imprisoned and put by;
"And every day one only from the store
"Of victims was brought out by lot to die,
"In fane by Orontea built, before
"An altar raised to Vengeance; and to ply
"As headsman, and dispatch the unhappy men,
"One was by lot selected from the ten.

XXXVI.

"To that foul murderous shore by chance did fare,
"After long years elapsed, a youthful wight,
"Whose fathers sprung from good Alcides were,
"And he, of proof in arms, Elbanio hight;
"There was he seized, of peril scarce aware,
"As unsuspecting such a foul despite:
"And, closely guarded, into prison flung,
"Kept for like cruel use the rest among.

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XXXVII.

" Adorned with every fair accomplishment,
" Of pleasing face and manners was the peer,
" And of a speech so sweet and eloquent,
" Him the deaf adder might have stopped to hear;
" So that of him to Alexandria went
" Tidings as of a precious thing and rare.
" She was the daughter of that matron bold,
" Queen Orontea, that yet lived, though old.

XXXVIII.

" Yet Orontea lived, while of that shore
" The other settlers all were dead and gone;
" And now ten times as many such or more
" Had into strength and greater credit grown.
" Nor for ten forges, often closed, in store
" Have the ill-furnished band more files than one;
" And the ten champions have as well the care
" To welcome shrewdly all who thither fare.

XXXIX.

" Young Alexandria, who the blooming peer
" Burned to behold so praised on every part,
" The special pleasure him to see and hear,
" Won from her mother; and, about to part
" From him, discovers that the cavalier
" Remains the master of her tortured heart;
" Finds herself bound, and that 'tis vain to stir,
" —A captive made by her own prisoner."

XL.

' If pity,' (said Elbanio) ' lady fair,
' Was in this cruel region known, as through
' All other countries, near or distant, where
' The wandering sun sheds light and colouring hue,
' I by your beauty's kindly charms should dare
' (Which make each gentle spirit bound to you)
' To beg my life; which always, at your will,
' Should I be ready for your love to spill.

XLI.

' But since deprived of all humanity
' Are human bosoms in this cruel land,
' I shall not now request my life of thee,
' (For fruitless would, I know, be the demand)
' But, whether a good knight or bad I be,
' Ask but like such to die with arms in hand,
' And not as one condemned to penal pain;
' Or like brute beast in sacrifice be slain.'

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XLII.

"The gentle maid, her eye bedimm'd with tear,
"In pity for the hapless youth, replied;
'Though this land be more cruel and severe
'Than any other country, far and wide,
'Each woman is not a Medæa here
'As thou wouldst make her; and, if all beside
'Were of such evil kind, in me alone
'Should an exception to the rest be known.

XLIII.

'And though I, like so many here, of yore
'Was full of evil deeds and cruelty,
'I can well say, I never had before
'A fitting subject for my clemency.
'But fiercer were I than a tiger, more
'Hard were my heart than diamond, if in me
'All hardness did not vanish and give place
'Before your courage, gentleness, and grace.

XLIV.

'Ah! were the cruel statute less severe
'Against the stranger to these shores conveyed!
'So should I not esteem by death too dear
'A ransom for thy worthier life were paid.
'But none is here so great, sir cavalier,
'Nor of such puissance as to lend thee aid;
'And what thou askest, though a scanty grace,
'Were difficult to compass in this place.

XLV.

'And yet will I endeavour to obtain
'For thee, before thou perish, this content;
'Though much, I fear, 'twill but augment thy pain,
'And thee protracted death but more torment.'
'So I the ten encounter,' (said again
Elbanio), 'I at heart am confident
'Myself to save, and enemies to slay;
'Though made of iron were the whole array.'

XLVI.

"To this the youthful Alexandria nought
"Made answer, saving with a piteous sigh;
"And from the conference a bosom brought,
"Gored with deep wounds, beyond all remedy.
"To Orontea she repaired, and wrought
"On her to will the stripling should not die,
"Should he display such courage and such skill
"As with his single hand the ten to kill.

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XLVII.

" Queen Orontea straightway bade unite
" Her council, and bespoke the assembled band;
' It still behoves us place the prowest wight
' Whom we can find, to guard our ports and strand.
' And, to discover whom to take or slight,
' 'Tis fitting that we prove the warrior's hand:
' Lest, to our loss, the election made be wrong,
' And we enthrone the weak and slay the strong.

XLVIII.

' I deem it fit, if you the counsel shown
' Deem fit as well, in future to ordain,
' That each upon our coast by Fortune thrown,
' Before he in the temple shall be slain,
' Shall have the choice, instead of this, alone
' Battle against ten others to maintain;
' And if he conquer, shall the port defend
' With other comrades, pardoned to that end.

XLIX.

' I say this, since to strive against our ten,
' It seems, that one imprisoned here will dare:
' Who, if he stands against so many men,
' By Heaven, deserves that we should hear his prayer;
' But if he rashly boasts himself, again
' As worthily due punishment should bear.'
" Here Orontea ceased; on the other side,
" To her the oldest of the dames replied.

L.

' The leading cause, for which to entertain
' This intercourse with men we first agreed,
' Was not because we, to defend this reign,
' Of their assistance stood in any need;
' For we have skill and courage to maintain
' This of ourselves, and force, withal, to speed.
' Would that we could in all as well avail
' Without their succour, nor succession fail!

LI.

' But since this may not be, we some have made
' (These few) partakers of our company;
' That, ten to one, we be not overlaid;
' Nor they possess them of the sovereignty.
' Not that we for protection need their aid,
' But simply to increase and multiply,
' Then be their powers to this sole feat addressed,
' And be they sluggards, idle for the rest.

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LII.

'To keep among us such a puissant wight
'Our first design would render wholly vain.
'If one can singly slay ten men in fight,
'How many women can he not restrain?
'If our ten champions had possessed such might,
'They the first day would have usurped the reign.
'To arm a hand more powerful than your own
'Is an ill method to maintain the throne.

LIII.

'Reflect withal, that if your prisoner speed
'So that he kill ten champions in the fray,
'A hundred women's cry, whose lords will bleed
'Beneath his faulchion, shall your ears dismay.
'Let him not 'scape by such a murderous deed;
'But, if he would, propound some other way.
'—Yet if he of those ten supply the place,
'And please a hundred women, grant him grace.'

LIV.

"This was severe Artemia's sentiment,
"(So was she named) and had her counsel weighed,
"Elbanio to the temple had been sent,
"To perish by the sacrificial blade.
"But Orontea, willing to content
"Her daughter, to the matron answer made;
"And urged so many reasons, and so wrought,
"The yielding senate granted what she sought.

LV.

"Elbanio's beauty (for so fair to view
"Never was any cavalier beside)
"So strongly works upon the youthful crew,
"Which in that council sit the state to guide,
"That the opinion of the older few
"That like Artemia think, is set aside;
"And little lacks but that the assembled race
"Absolve Elbanio by especial grace.

LVI.

"To pardon him in fine the dames agreed:
"But, after slaying his half-score, and when
"He in the next assault as well should speed,
"Not with a hundred women, but with ten;
"And, furnished to his wish with arms and steed,
"Next day he was released from dungeon-den,
"And singly with ten warriors matched in plain,
"Who by his arm successively were slain.

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LVII.

"He to new proof was put the following night,
"Against ten damsels naked and alone;
"When so successful was the stripling's might,
"He took the 'say of all the troop, and won
"Such grace with Orontea, that the knight
"Was by the dame adopted for her son;
"And from her Alexandria had to wife,
"With those whom he had proved in amorous strife.

LVIII.

"And him she left with Alexandria, heir
"To this famed city, which from her was hight,
"So he and all who his successors were,
"Should guard the law which willed, whatever wight,
"Conducted hither by his cruel star,
"Upon this miserable land did light,
"Should have his choice to perish by the knife,
"Or singly with ten foes contend in strife.

LIX.

"And if he should dispatch the men by day,
"At night should prove him with the female crew;
"And if so fortunate that in this play
"He proved again the conqueror, he, as due,
"The female band, as prince and guide, should sway,
"And his ten consorts at his choice renew:
"And reign with them, till other should arrive
"Of stouter hand, and him of life deprive.

LX.

"They for two thousand years nigh past away
"This usage have maintained, and yet maintain
"The impious rite; and rarely passes day
"But stranger wight is slaughtered in the fane.
"If he, Elbanio-like, ten foes assay,
"(And such sometimes is found) he oft is slain
"In the first charge: nor, in a thousand, one
"The other feat, of which I spake, has done.

LXI.

"Yet some there are have done it, though so few,
"They may be numbered on the fingers; one
"Of the victorious cavaliers, but who
"Reigned with his ten short time, was Argilon:
"For, smote by me, whom ill wind hither blew,
"The knight to his eternal rest is gone.
"Would I with him that day had filled a grave,
"Rather than in such scorn survive a slave!

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LXII.

" For amorous pleasures, laughter, game, and play,
" Which evermore delight the youthful breast;
" The gem, the purple garment, rich array,
" And in his city place before the rest.
" Little, by Heaven, the wretched man appay
" Who of his liberty is dispossest:
" And not to have the power to leave this shore
" To me seems shameful servitude and sore.

LXIII.

" To know I wear away life's glorious spring
" In such effeminate and slothful leisure
" Is to my troubled heart a constant sting,
" And takes away the taste of every pleasure.
" Fame bears my kindred's praise on outstretched wing,
" Even to the skies; and haply equal measure
" I of the glories of my blood might share
" If I united with my brethren were.

LXIV.

" Methinks my fate does such injurious deed
" By me, condemned to servitude so base,
" As he who turns to grass the generous steed
" To run amid the herd of meaner race,
" Because unfit for war or worthier meed,
" Through blemish, or disease of sight or pace.
" Nor hoping but by death, alas! to fly
" So vile a service, I desire to die."

LXV.

Here Guido ceased to address the martial peers,
And cursed withal the day, in high disdain,
That he achieved o'er dames and cavaliers
The double victory which bestowed that reign.
Astolpho hides his name, and silent hears,
Until to him by many a sign is plain
That this Sir Guido is, as he had said,
The issue of his kinsman Aymon's bed.

LXVI.

Then cried; " The English duke, Astolpho, I
" Thy cousin am," and clipt him round the waist,
And in a kindly act of courtesy,
Not without weeping, kissed him and embraced.
Then, " Kinsman dear, thy birth to certify
" No better sign thy mother could have placed
" About thy neck. Enough! that sword of thine,
" And courage, vouch thee of our valiant line."

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LXVII.

Guido who gladly would in other place
So near a kin have welcomed, in dismay
Beholds him here and with a mournful face;
Knowing, if he himself survives the fray,
Astolpho will be doomed to slavery base,
His fate deferred but till the following day;
And he shall perish, if the duke is free:
So that one's good the other's ill shall be.

LXVIII.

He grieves, as well, the other cavaliers
Should through his means for ever captive be;
Nor, that he should, if slain, those martial peers
Deliver by *his* death from slavery.
Since if Marphisa from one quicksand clears
The troop, yet these from other fails to free,
She will have won the victory in vain;
For they will be enslaved, and she be slain.

LXIX.

On the other hand, the stripling's age, in May
Of youth, with courtesy and valour fraught,
Upon the maid and comrades with such sway,
Touching their breasts with love and pity, wrought
That they of freedom, for which he must pay
The forfeit of his life, nigh loathed the thought;
And if Marphisa him perforce must kill,
She is resolved as well herself to spill.

LXX.

"Join thou with us," she to Sir Guido cried,
"And we from hence will sally"—"From within
"These walls to sally"—Guido on his side
Answered, "Ne'er hope: With me you lose or win."
"I fear not, I," the martial maid replied,
"To execute whatever I begin;
"Nor know what can securer path afford
"Than that which I shall open with my sword.

LXXI.

"Such proof of thy fair prowess have I made,
"With thee I every enterprise would dare.
"To-morrow when about the palisade
"The crowds assembled in the circus are,
"Let us on every side the mob invade,
"Whether they fly or for defence prepare;
"Then give the town to fire, and on their bed
"Of earth to wolf and vulture leave the dead."

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LXXII.

He; "Ready shalt thou find me in the strife
"To follow thee, or perish at thy side:
"But let us hope not to escape with life.
"Enough, is vengeance somedeal satisfied
"Ere death; for oft ten thousand, maid and wife,
"I in the place have witnessed; and, outside,
"As many castle, wall and port, defend.
"Nor know I certain way from hence to wend."

LXXIII.

"And were there more (Marphisa made reply)
"Than Xerxes led, our squadron to oppose,
"More than those rebel spirits from the sky
"Cast out to dwell amid perpetual woes,
"All in one day should by this weapon die,
"Wert thou with me, at least, not with my foes."
To her again, "No project but must fail,
"Sir Guido said) I know, save this avail."

LXXIV.

"This only us can save, should it succeed;
"This, which but now remembered I shall teach.
"To dames alone our laws the right concede
"To sally, or set foot upon the beach,
"And hence to one of mine in this our need
"Must I commit myself, and aid beseech;
"Whose love for me, by perfect friendship tied,
"Has oft by better proof than this been tried.

LXXV.

"No less than me would she desire that I
"Should 'scape from slavery, so she went with me;
"And that, without her rival's company,
"She of my lot should sole partaker be.
"She bark or pinnace, in the harbour nigh,
"Shall bid, while yet 'tis dark, prepare for sea;
"Which shall await your sailors, rigged and yare
"For sailing, when they thither shall repair.

LXXVI.

"Behind me, in a solid band comprest,
"Ye merchants, mariners and warriors, who,
"Driven to this city, have set up your rest
"Beneath this roof, (for which my thanks are due)
"—You have to force your way with stedfast breast,
"If adversaries interrupt our crew.
"'Tis thus I hope, by succour of the sword,
"To clear a passage through the cruel horde."

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LXXVII.

"Do as thou wilt;" Marphisa made reply,
"I of escape am confident withal:
"And likelier 'twere that by my hand should die
"The martial race, encompassed by this wall,
"Than any one should ever see me fly,
"Or guess by other sign that fears appal.
"I would my passage force in open day,
"And shameful in my sight were other way.

LXXVIII.

"I wot if I were for a woman known,
"Honour and place from women I might claim,
"Here gladly entertained, and classed as one
"Haply among their chiefs of highest fame:
"But privilege or favour will I none
"Unshared by those with whom I hither came.
"Too base it were, did I depart or free
"Remain, to leave the rest in slavery."

LXXIX.

These speeches by Marphisa made, and more,
Showed that what only had restrained her arm
Was the respect she to the safety bore
Of the companions whom her wrath might harm;
By this alone withheld from taking sore
And signal vengeance on the female swarm.
And hence she left in Guido's care to shape
What seemed the fittest means for their escape.

LXXX.

Sir Guido speaks that night with Alery
(So the most faithful of his wives was hight)
Nor needs long prayer to make the dame agree,
Disposed already to obey the knight.
She takes a ship and arms the bark for sea,
Stowed with her richest chattels for their flight;
Feigning design, as soon as dawn ensues,
To sail with her companions on a cruise.

LXXXI.

She into Guido's palace had before
Bid sword and spear and shield and cuirass bear;
With the intent to furnish from this store,
Merchants and sailors that half naked were.
Some watch, and some repose upon the floor,
And rest and guard among each other share;
Oft marking, still with harness on their backs,
If ruddy yet with light the orient wax.

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LXXXII.

Not yet from earth's hard visage has the sun
Lifted her veil of dim and dingy dye;
Scarcely Lycaon's child, her furrow done,
Has turned about her ploughshare in the sky;
When to the theatre the women run
Who would the fearful battle's end espy,
As swarming bees upon their threshold cluster,
Who bent on change of realm in springtide muster.

LXXXIII.

With warlike trumpet, drum, and sound of horn,
The people make the land and welkin roar;
Summoning thus their chieftain to return,
And end the unfinished warfare. Covered o'er
With arms stand Aquilant and Gryphon stern,
And the redoubted duke from England's shore,
Marphisa, Dudo, Sansonet, and all
The knights or footmen harboured in that hall.

LXXXIV.

'Hence to descend towards the sea or port
'The way across the place of combat lies;
'Nor was there other passage, long or short,'
Sir Guido so to his companions cries:
And having ceased his comrades to exhort,
To do their best set forth in silent wise,
And in the place appeared, amid the throng,
Head of a squad above a hundred strong.

LXXXV.

Towards the other gate Sir Guido went,
Hurrying his band, but, gathered far and nigh
The mighty multitude, for aye intent
To storm, and clad in arms, when they descry
The comrades whom he leads, perceive his bent,
And truly deem he is about to fly.
All in a thought betake them to their knees,
And at the portal part the knight oppose.

LXXXVI.

Sir Guido and the [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

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LXXXVII.

Of proof the corslet was each warrior wore,
Who without this would have had worse to fear:
Sansonet's horse was slain, and that which bore
Marphisa: to himself the English peer
Exclaimed, 'Why wait I longer? As if more
"My horn could ever succour me than here.
"Since the sword steads not, I will make assay
"If with my bugle I can clear the way."

LXXXVIII.

As he was customed in extremity,
He to his mouth applied the bugle's round;
The wide world seemed to tremble, earth and sky
As he in air discharged the horrid sound.
Such terror smote the dames, that, bent to fly,
When in their ears the deafening horn was wound,
Not only they the gate unguarded left,
But from the circus reeled, of wit bereft.

LXXXIX.

As family, awaked in sudden wise,
Leaps from the windows and from lofty height,
Periling life and limb, when in surprise
They see, now near, the fire's encircling light,
Which had, while slumber sealed their heavy eyes,
By little and by little waxed at night:
Reckless of life, thus each, impelled by dread,
At sound of that appalling bugle fled.

XC.

Above, below, and here and there, the rout
Rise in confusion and attempt to fly.
At once, above a thousand swarm about
Each entrance, to each other's lett, and lie
In heaps: from window these, or stage without,
Leap headlong; in the press these smothered die.
Broken is many an arm, and many a head;
And one lies crippled, and another dead.

XCI.

Amid the mighty ruin which ensued,
Cries pierce the very heavens on every part.
Where'er the sound is heard, the multitude,
In panic at the deafening echo, start.
When you are told that without hardihood
Appear the rabble, and of feeble heart,
This need not move your marvel; for by nature
The hare is evermore a timid creature.

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XCII.

But of Marphisa what will be your thought,
And Guido late so furious?—of the two
Young sons of Oliver, that lately wrought
Such deeds in honour of their lineage? who
Lately a hundred thousand held as nought,
And now, deprived of courage, basely flew,
As ring-doves flutter and as coneys fly,
Who hear some mighty noise resounding nigh.

XCIII.

For so to friend as stranger, noxious are
The powers that in the enchanted horn reside.
Sansonet, Guido, follow, with the pair*
Of brethren bold, Marphisa terrified.
Nor flying, can they to such distance fare,
But that their ears are dinned. On every side
Astolpho, on his foaming courser borne,
Lends louder breath to his enchanted horn.

XCIV.

One sought the sea, and one the mountain-top,
One fled to hide herself in forest hoar;
And this, who turned not once nor made a stop,
Not for ten days her headlong flight forbore:
These from the bridge in that dread moment drop,
Never to climb the river's margin more.
So temple, house, and square and street were drained,
That nigh unpeopled the wide town remained.

XCV.

Marphisa, Guido, and the brethren two,
With Sansonetto, pale and trembling, hie
Towards the sea, and behind these the crew
Of frighted mariners and merchants fly;
And 'twixt the forts, in bark, prepared with view
To their escape, discover Alery;
Who in sore haste receives the warriors pale,
And bids them ply their oars and make all sail.

XCVI.

The duke within and out the town had beat
From the surrounding hills to the sea-side,
And of its people emptied every street.
All fly before the deafening sound, and hide:
Many in panic, seeking a retreat,
Lurk, in some place obscure and filthy stied;
Many, not knowing whither to repair,
Plunge in the neighbouring sea, and perish there.

* Gryphon and Aquilant.

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XCVII.

The duke arrives, seeking the friendly band,
Whom he had hoped to find upon the quay
He turns and gazes round the desert strand,
And none is there—directs along the bay
His eyes, and now, far distant from the land,
Beholds the parting frigate under way.
So that the paladin, for his escape—
The vessel gone—must other project shape.

XCVIII.

Let him depart! nor let it trouble you
That he so long a road must beat alone;
Where, never without fear, man journeys through
Wild paynim countries: danger is there none,
But what he with his bugle may eschew,
Whose dread effect the English duke has shown;
And let his late companions be our care,
Who trembling to the beach had made repair.

XCIX.

They from that cruel and ensanguined ground
To seaward, under all their canvas, bore;
And having gained such offing, that the sound
Of that alarming horn was heard no more,
Unwonted shame inflicted such a wound,
That all a face of burning crimson wore.
One dares not eye the other, and they stand
With downcast looks, a mute and mournful band.

C.

Fixed on his course, the pilot passes by
Cyprus and Rhodes, and ploughs the Ægean sea:
Beholds a hundred islands from him fly,
And Malea's fearful headland: fanned by free
And constant wind, sees vanish from the eye
The Greek Morea; rounding Sicily,
Into the Tuscan sea his frigate veers,
And, coasting Italy's fair region, steers:

CI.

Last rises Luna, where his family
Is waiting his return; the patron hoar
Give thanks to God at having passed the sea
Without more harm, and makes the well known shore.
Here, offering passage to their company,
They find a master, ready to unmoor
For France, and that same day his pinnace climb;
Thence wafted to Marseilles in little time.

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CII.

There was not Bradamant, who used to sway
The land, and had that city in her care,
And who (if present there) to make some stay
Would have compelled them by her courteous prayer
They disembarked; and that same hour away
Did bold Marphisa at a venture fare;
Bidding adieu to salvage Guido's wife,
And to the four, her comrades in the strife:

CIII.

Saying, 'she deems unfitting for a knight
'To fare in like great fellowship; that so
'The starlings and the doves in flock unite,
'And every beast who fears,—the stag and doe;
'But hawk and eagle, that in other's might
'Put not their trust, for ever singly go;
'And lion, bear, and tiger, roam alone,
'Who fear no prowess greater than their own.'

CIV.

But none with her opine, and, in the lack
Of a companion, singly must she fare.
So then, alone and friendless, she a track
Uncouth pursues, and through a wooded lair.
Gryphon the white and Aquilant the black
Take road more beaten with the other pair;
And on the following day a castle see,
Within which they are harboured courteously.

CV.

Courteously I, in outward show, would say;
For soon the contrary was made appear.
Since he, the castellain, who with display
Of kindness sheltered them and courteous cheer,
The night ensuing took them as they lay
Couched in their beds, secure and void of fear.
Nor from the snare would he his prisoners loose.
Till they had sworn to observe an evil use.

CVI.

But I will first pursue the martial maid,
Ere more of these, fair sir, I shall proclaim.
Beyond the Durence, Rhone, and Saone she strayed,
And to the foot of sunny mountain came;
And there approaching in black gown arrayed,
Beside a torrent, saw an ancient dame;
Who with long journey weak, and wearied sore,
Appeared, but pined by melancholy more.

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CVII.

This was the beldam who had wont to ply
Serving the robbers in the caverned mount;
Whither stern Justice sent (that they might die
By that good paladin) Anglante's count.
The aged harridan, for cause which I
To you shall in another place recount,
Now many days by path obscure had flown,
Still fearing lest her visage should be known.

CVIII.

The semblance now of foreign cavalier
She in Marphisa saw, in arms and vest;
And hence she flies not her, though wont to fear,
(As being natives of that land) the rest;
—Nay, with security and open cheer,
Stops at the ford the damsel to arrest:
Stops at the ford—where that old beldam meets
Marphisa, and with fair encounter greets.

CIX.

And next implored the maid, she of her grace
Would bear her on the croupe to the other shore.
Marphisa, who was come of gentle race,
The hag with her across the torrent bore;
And is content to bear, till she can place
In a securer road the beldam hoar,
Clear of a spacious marish: at its end
They see a cavalier towards them wend.

CX.

In shining armour and in fair array,
The warrior rode on saddle richly wrought
Towards the river, and upon his way
With him a single squire and damsel brought.
Of passing beauty was the lady gay,
But little pleasing was her semblance haught;
All overblown with insolence and pride,
Worthy the cavalier who was her guide.

CXI.

He of Maganza was a count, who bore
The lady with him (Pinabello hight):
The same who Bradamant, some months before,
Had plunged into a hollow cave in spite.
Those many sobs, those burning sighs and sore,
Those tears which had nigh quenched the warrior's sight,—
All for the damsel were, now at his side;
And then by that false necromancer stied.

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CXII.

But when the magic tower upon the hill
Was razed, the dwelling of Atlantes hoar,
And every one was free to rove at will,
Through Bradamant's good deed and virtuous lore,
The damsel, who had been compliant still
With the desires of Pinabel before,
Rejoined him, and now journeying in a round
With him, from castle was to castle bound.

CXIII.

As wanton and ill-customed, when she spies
Marphisa's aged charge approaching near,
She cannot rein her saucy tongue, but plies
Her, in her petulance, with laugh and jeer.
Marphisa haught, unwont in any wise
Outrage from whatsoever part to hear,
Makes answer to the dame, in angry tone,
That 'handsomer than her she deems the crone.

CXIV.

'And that she this would prove upon her knight
'With pact that she might strip the bonnibell
'Of gown and palfrey, if, o'erthrown in fight,
'Her champion from his goodly courser fell.'
—In silence to have overpast the slight
Would have been sin and shame in Pinabel,
Who for short answer seized his shield and spear,
And wheeled, and drove at her in fierce career.

CXV.

Marphisa grasped a mighty lance, and thrust,
Encountering him, at Pinabello's eyes;
And stretched him so astounded in the dust,
That motionless an hour the warrior lies.
Marphisa, now victorious in the just,
Gave orders to strip off the glorious guise
And ornaments wherewith the maid was drest,
And with the spoils her ancient crone invest;

CXVI.

And willed that she should don the youthful weed,
Bedizened at the haughty damsel's cost;
And took away as well the goodly steed
Which her had thither borne, and—bent to post
On her old track—with her the hag will speed,
Who seems most hideous when adorned the most.
Three days the tedious road the couple beat,
Without adventure needful to repeat.

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CXVII.

On the fourth day they met a cavalier,
Who came in fury galloping alone.
If you the stranger's name desire to hear,
I tell you 'twas Zerbino, a king's son,
Of beauty and of worth example rare,
Now grieved and angered, as unveriged of one,
Who a great act of courtesy, which fain
The warrior would have done, had rendered vain.

CXVIII.

Vainly the young Zerbino, through the glade,
Had chased that man of his, who this despite
Had done him, who himself so well conveyed
Away and took such 'vantage in his flight,
So hid by wood and mist, which overlaid
The horizon and bedimmed the morning-light,
That he escaped Zerbino's grasp, and lay
Concealed until his wrath was past away.

CXIX.

Zerbino laughed parforce, when he descried
That beldam's face, though he was full of rage;
For too ill-sorted seemed her vest of pride
With her foul visage, more deformed by age;
And to the proud Marphisa, at her side
The prince, exclaimed, "Sir warrior, you are sage,
"In having chosen damsel of a sort,
"Whom none, I ween, will grudge you should escort."

CXX.

Older than Sibyl seemed the beldam hoar,
(As far as from her wrinkles one might guess),
And in the youthful ornaments she wore,
Looked like an ape which men in mockery dress;
And now appears more foul, as angered sore,
While rage and wrath her kindled eyes express.
For none can do a woman worse despite
Than to proclaim her old and foul to sight.

CXXI.

To have sport of him—as she had—an air
Of wrath the maid assumed upon her part,
And to the prince, "By Heaven, more passing fair
"Is this my lady than thou courteous art,"
Exclaimed in answer; "though I am aware
"What thou hast uttered comes not from thy heart.
"Thou wilt not own her beauty; a device
"Put on to masque thy sovereign cowardice.

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CXXII.

"And of what stamp would be that cavalier
"Who found such fair and youthful dame alone,
"Without protection, in the forest drear,
"Nor sought to make the lovely weft his own?"
—"So well she sorts with thee," replied the peer,
"'Twere ill that she were claimed by any one:
"Nor I of her would thee in any wise
"Deprive; God rest thee merry with thy prize!

CXXIII.

"But wouldst thou prove what is my chivalry
"On other ground I to thy wish incline;
"Yet deem me not of such perversity
"As to tilt with thee for this prize of thine.
"Or fair or foul, let her remain thy fee;
"I would not, I, such amity disjoin.
"Well are ye paired, and safely would I swear
"That thou as valiant art as she is fair."

CXXIV.

To him Marphisa, "Thou in thy despite
"Shalt try to bear from me the dame away.
"I will not suffer that so fair a sight
"Thou shouldst behold, nor seek to gain the prey."
To her the prince, "I know not wherefore wight
"Should suffer pain and peril in affray,
"Striving for victory, where, for his pains,
"The victor loses, and the vanquished gains."

CXXV.

"If this condition please not, other course
"Which ill thou canst refuse, I offer thee,"
(Marphisa cried): "If thou shalt me unhorse
"In this our tourney, she remains with me:
"But if I win, I give her thee perforce.
"Then prove we now who shall without her be.
"Premised, if loser, thou shalt be her guide,
"Wherever it may please the dame to ride."

CXXVI.

"And be it so," Zerbino cried, and wheeled
Swiftly his foaming courser for the shock,
And rising in his stirrups scowered the field,
Firm in his seat, and smote, with levelled stock,
For surer aim, the damsel in mid-shield;
But she sate stedfast as a metal rock,
And at the warrior's morion thrust so well,
She clean out-bore him senseless from the sell.

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CXXVII.

Much grieved the prince, to whom in other fray
The like misfortune had not chanced before,
Who had unhorsed some thousands in his day:
Now shamed, he thought for ever. Troubled sore,
And mute long space upon the ground he lay,
And, when 'twas recollected, grieved the more,
That he had promised, and that he was bound,
To accompany the hag where'er she wound.

CXXVIII.

Turning about to him the victoress cried,
Laughing, "This lady I to thee present,
"And the more beauty is in her descried,
"The more that she is thine I am content,
"Now in my place her champion and her guide.
"But do not thou thy plighted faith repent,
"So that thou fail, as promised, to attend
"The dame, wherever she may please to wend."

CXXIX.

Without awaiting answer, to career
She spurred her horse, and vanished in the wood.
Zerbino, deeming her a cavalier,
Cried to the crone, "By whom am I subdued?"
And, knowing 'twould be poison to his ear,
And that it would inflame his angered blood,
She in reply, "It was a damsel's blow
"Which from thy lofty saddle laid thee low.

CXXX.

"She, for her matchless force, deservedly
"Usurps from cavalier the sword and lance;
"And even from the east is come to try
"Her strength against the paladins of France."
Not only was his cheek of crimson dye,
Such shame Zerbino felt at his mischance,
Little was wanting (so his blushes spread)
But all the arms he wore had glowed as red.

CXXXI.

He mounts, and blames himself in angry wise,
In that he had no better kept his seat.
Within herself the beldam laughs, and tries
The Scottish warrior more to sting and heat.
To him for promised convoy she applies;
And he, who knows that there is no retreat,
Stands like tired courser, who in pensive fit,
Hangs down his ears, controlled by spur and bit.

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CXXXII.

And, sighing deeply, cries, in his despair,
"Fell Fortune, with what change dost thou repay
"My loss! she who was fairest of the fair,
"Who should be mine, by thee is snatched away!
"And thinkest thou the evil to repair
"With her whom thou hast given to me this day?
"Rather than make like ill exchange, less cross
"It were to undergo a total loss.

CXXXIII.

"Her, who for virtue and for beauteous form
"Was never equalled, nor will ever be,
"Thou on the rocks hast wrecked, in wintry storm,
"As food for fowls and fishes of the sea;
"And her who should have fed the earth-bred worm
"Thou hast delivered from her destiny;
"Preserved beyond her date, some ten or score
"Of years, to harass and torment me more."

CXXXIV.

So spake Zerbino, and like grief displayed,
In his despairing words and woful mien,
For such an odious acquisition made,
As he had suffered when he lost his queen.
The aged woman now, from what he said,
Though she before Zerbino had not seen,
Perceived 'twas him of whom, in the thieves' hold,
Isabel of Gallicia erst had told.

CXXXV.

If you remember what was said before,
This was the hag who 'scaped out of the cave,
Where Isabella, who had wounded sore
Zerbino's heart, was long detained a slave;
Who oft had told how she her native shore
Had left, and, launching upon ocean's wave
Her frigate, had been wrecked by wind and swell
Upon the rocky shallows near Rochelle.

CXXXVI.

And she to *her* Zerbino's goodly cheer
And gentle features had pourtrayed so well,
That the hag hearing him, and now more near,
Letting her eyes upon his visage dwell,
Discerned it was the youth for whom, whilere,
Had grieved at heart the prisoned Isabel;
Whose loss she in the cavern more deplored,
Than being captive to the murderous horde.

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CXXXVII.

The beldam, hearing what in rage and grief
Zerbino vents, perceives the youth to be
Deceived, and cheated by the false belief
That Isabel had perished in the sea;
And though she might have given the prince relief,
Knowing the truth, in her perversity
What would have made him joyful she concealed,
And only what would cause him grief revealed.

CXXXVIII.

"Hear, you that are so proud," (the hag pursues),
"And flout me with such insolence and scorn,
"You would entreat me fair to have the news
"I know of her whose timeless death you mourn;
"But to be strangled would I rather choose,
"And be into a thousand pieces torn.
"Whereas if you had made me kinder cheer,
"Haply from me the secret might you hear."

CXXXIX.

As the dog's rage is quickly overblown,
Who flies the approaching robber to arrest,
If the thief proffer piece of bread or bone,
Or offer other lure which likes him best;
As readily Zerbino to the crone
Humbled himself, and burned to know the rest;
Who, in the hints of that old woman, read
That she had news of her he mourned as dead.

CXL.

And with more winning mien to her applied,
And her did supplicate, entreat, conjure,
By men and gods, the truth no more to hide,
Did she benign or evil lot endure.
The hard and pertinacious crone replied,
"Nought shalt thou hear, thy comfort to assure.
"Isabel has not yielded up her breath,
"But lives a life she would exchange for death.

CXLI.

"She, since thou heardest of her destiny,
"Within few days, has fallen into the power
"Of more than twenty. If restored to thee,
"Think now, if thou hast hope to crop her flower."
—"Curst hag, how well thou shapest thy history,
"Yet knowest it is false! Her virgin dower
"Secure from brutal wrong, would none invade,
"Though in the power of twenty were the maid."

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CXLII.

Questioning of the maid, he when and where
She saw her, vainly asked the beldam hoar,
Who, ever restive to Zerbino's prayer,
To what she had rehearsed would add no more.
The prince in the beginning spoke her fair,
And next to cut her throat in fury swore.
But prayers and menaces alike were weak;
Nor could he make the hideous beldam speak.

CXLIII.

At length Zerbino to his tongue gave rest,
Since speaking to the woman booted nought;
Scarcely his heart found room within his breast,
Such dread suspicion had her story wrought.
He to find Isabella was so pressed,
Her in the midst of fire he would have sought;
But could not hurry more than was allowed
By her his convoy, since he so had vowed.

CXLIV.

They hence, by strange and solitary way,
Rove, as the beldam does her will betoken,
Nor climbing, nor descending hill, survey
Each other's face, nor any word is spoken.
But when the sun upon the middle day
Had turned his back, their silence first was broken
By cavalier encountered in their way:
What followed the ensuing strain will say.

CANTO XXI.

ARGUMENT.

Zerbino for Gabrina, who a heart
Of asp appears to bear, contends. O'erthrown,
The Fleming falls upon the other part,
Through cause of that despised and odious crone.
He wounded sore, and writhing with the smart,
The beldam's treason to the prince makes known,
Whose scorn and hatred hence derive new force.
Towards loud cries Zerbino spurs his horse.

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I.

No cord I well believe is wound so tight
Round chest, nor nails the plank so fastly hold,
As Faith enwraps an honourable sprite
In its secure, inextricable, fold;
Nor holy Faith, it seems, except in white
Was mantled over in the days of old;
So by the ancient limner ever painted,
As by one speck, one single blemish tainted.

II.

Faith should be kept unbroken evermore,
With one or with a thousand men united;
As well if given in grot or forest hoar,
Remote from town and hamlet, as if plighted
Amid a crowd of witnesses, before
Tribunal, and in act and deed recited:
Nor needs the solemn sanction of an oath:
It is sufficient that we pledge our troth.

III.

And this maintains as it maintained should be,
In each emprize the Scottish cavalier,*
And gives good proof of his fidelity,
Quitting his road with that old crone to steer;
Although this breeds the youth such misery,
As 'twould to have Disease itself as near,
Or even Death; but with him heavier weighed
Than his desire the promise he had made.

IV.

Of him I told who felt at heart such load,
Reflecting she beneath his charge must go,
He spake no word; and thus in silent mode
Both fared: so sullen was Zerbino's woe.
I said how next their silence, as they rode,
Was broke, when Sol his hindmost wheels did show,
By an adventurous errant cavalier,
Who in mid pathway met the crone and peer.

V.

The hag, who the approaching warrior knew,
(Hermonides of Holland he was hight)
That bore upon a field of sable hue
A bar of vermeil tint, transversely dight,
Did humbly now to good Zerbino sue,
—Her pride abased, and look of haught despite—
And him reminded of the promise made,
When her Marphisa to his care conveyed.

* Zerbino.

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VI.

Because as foe to *her* and *hers* she knew
The knight they were encountering, who had slain
Her only brother and her father true;
And was advised, the traitor would be fain
By her, the remnant of her race, to do
What he had perpetrated on the twain.
"Woman, while guarded by my arm (he said),
"I will not thou shouldst any danger dread."

VII.

As nearer now, the stranger knight espied
That face, which was so hateful in his sight,
With menacing and savage voice he cried,
"Either with me prepare thyself to fight,
"Or arm thee not on that old woman's side,
"Who by my hand shall perish, as is right.
"If thou contendest for her, thou art slain;
"For such their portion is who wrong maintain."

VIII.

Him young Zerbino answered courteously,
'Twas sign of evil and ungenerous will,
'And corresponded not with chivalry,
'That he a woman should desire to kill;
'Yet if the knight persists, he will not flee—
'But bids him well consider first how ill
'Twould sound, that he, a gentle knight and good,
'Should wish to dip his hand in woman's blood.'

IX.

This and yet more he vainly says; nor stand
They idle long; from word they pass to deed;
And having compass'd on the level land
Enough of ground, encounter on the mead.
Not fired in some rejoicing, from the hand
Discharged, so fast the whistling rockets speed,
As the two coursers bear the cavaliers
To hurtle in mid space with rested spears.

X.

Hermonides of Holland levelled low,
And for the youth's left flank the stroke intended;
But his weak lance was shivered by the blow,
And little the opposing Scot offended;
But vain was not the spear-thrust of his foe,
Who bored his opposite's good shield, and rended
His shoulder, by the lance pierced through and through,
And good Hermonides on earth o'erthrew.

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XI.

Thinking him slain who only lay amazed,
By pity prest, Zerbino leapt to ground,
And from his death-like face the vizor raised;
And he, as wakened out of sleep profound,
In silence, hard upon Zerbino gazed;
Then cried, "It does not me, in truth, confound,
"To think that I am overthrown by thee,
"Who seem'st the flower of errant chivalry.

XII.

"But it with reason grieves me this is done
"Upon account of a false woman's spite;
"Whose wicked cause I know not why you own,
"An office ill according with your might:
"And when to you the occasion shall be known
"Which urges me her wickedness to quite,
"Whene'er you think on it, you will repent
"How she by you was saved, and I was shent.

XIII.

"And if enough of breath, although I fear
"The contrary, is left me to expound
"Her evil actions, I shall make appear
"She in all guilt transgresses every bound.
"I had a brother once: the youthful peer
"Set out from Holland's isle, our natal ground,
"To serve Heraclius, 'mid his knights arrayed,
"Who then the Grecian empire's sceptre swayed.

XIV.

"Brother in arms and bosom-friend installed
"Here was he by a baron of that court,
"Who, in a pleasant site, and strongly walled,
"On Servia's distant frontier had a fort.
"Argæus he of whom I tell was called,
"Husband of that ill hag, whom in such sort
"He loved, as passed all mean, and misbecame
"One of his worth and honourable fame.

XV.

"But she, more volatile than leaf, when breeze
"Of autumn most its natural moisture dries,
"And strips the fluttering foliage from the trees,
"Which, blown about, before its fury flies,
"Changes her humour, and her husband sees,
"Whom she some time had loved, with other eyes,
"And in her every wish and every thought
"Schemes how my brother's love may best be bought.

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XVI.

"But not Acroceraunus fronts the brine,
"—Ill-famed—against whose base the billow heaves,
"Nor against Boreas stands the mountain pine,
"That has a hundred times renewed its leaves,
"And towering high on Alp or Apennine,
"With its fast root the rock as deeply cleaves,
"So firmly as the youth resists the will
"Of that foul woman, sink of every ill.

XVII.

"Now, as it oft befalls a cavalier
"Who seeks and finds adventure, high and low,
"It happened that my gentle brother near
"His comrade's fort was wounded by a foe;
"Where often, uninvited by the peer,
"He guested, was his host with him or no;
"And thither he resorted from the field.
"There to repose until his wounds were healed.

XVIII.

"While there he wounded lay, upon some need
"It chanced Argæus was compelled to ride.
"Quickly that wanton, from his presence freed
"As was her use, my brother's fealty tried.
"But he, as one unstained in thought and deed,
"So fell a goad no longer would abide;
"And to preserve his faith, as lures increased,
"Of many evils chose what seemed the least.

XIX.

"To break communion with the cavalier,
"To him—of many—seemed the lightest ill,
"And go so far, *that* wanton should not hear
"More of his name: this purpose to fulfil
"Was honester (though quitting one so dear
"Was hard) than to content her evil will,
"Or her foul wishes to her lord impart,
"Who cherished her as fondly as his heart.

XX.

"And though yet smarting with his wounds and pined,
"He dons his arms, and from the tower departs;
"And wanders thence with firm and constant mind,
"Ne'er to return again into those parts.
"But nought availed the purpose he designed;
"His projects Fortune baffled with new arts.
"This while, behold! the castellain returned,
"And bathed in bitter tears the wife discerned.

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XXI.

"And with flushed face, and hair in disarray,
"He asks of her what had disturbed her mood;
"Who, ere she in reply a word will say,
"Is vainly more than once to answer wooed;
"And all the while is thinking in what way
"The knight can best with vengeance be pursued.
"And well it suited with her fickle vein,
"Lightly to change her love into disdain.

XXII.

'Ah! why should I conceal (in fine she cried)
'The fault committed while you were away?
'For though I it from all the world should hide,
'This would my conscience to myself bewray.
'The soul, which is with secret evil dyed,
'Does with such penitence its fault appay,
'As every corporal sufferance exceeds
'That thou couldst deal me for my evil deeds;

XXIII.

'If evil *be* the deed, when done parforce.
'But, be it what it may, the mischief know;
'Then, with thy sword from this polluted corse,
'Delivered, let my spotless spirit go;
'And quench these wretched eyes, which in remorse,
'I, if I lived, on earth must ever throw,
'As the least penance of so foul a blame,
'And, look on whom they may, must blush for shame.

XXIV.

'My honour has been ruined by thy mate,
'Who to this body violence has done,
'And fearing lest I all to thee relate,
'Without farewell the graceless churl is gone.'
"She by this story made her husband hate
"The youth, than whom before was dearer none.
"Argæus credits all, without delay
"Arms him, and, breathing vengeance, posts away:

XXV.

"In knowledge of that country not to seek,
"He overtook the knight in little space;
"For my poor brother, yet diseased and weak,
"Rode, unsuspicious, at an easy pace;
"Argæus, eager his revenge to wreak,
"Assailed him straight in a sequestered place.
"My brother would excuse him if he might,
"But his indignant host insists on fight.

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XXVI.

" *This* one was sound and full of new disdain,
" *That* weak and friendly, as aye wont to be:
" My brother was ill fitted to sustain
" His altered comrade's new-born enmity.
" Philander, then unmeriting such pain,
" (So was the stripling named, described by me)
" Not gifted with the power to undergo
" Such fierce assault, was taken by the foe.

XXVII.

' Forbid it, Heaven! I should be led astray
' So by just wrath and thy iniquity,
' (To him Argæus cried) as thee to slay,
' Who loved thee once, and certes thou lovedst me,
' Though in the end thou ill didst this display,
' I yet desire this ample world may see
' That, measured by my deeds, I rank above
' Thyself in hate as highly as in love.

XXVIII.

' In other mode shall I chastise the deed,
' Than spilling more of thine ill blood.' " The peer,
" This said, commands his followers, on a steed,
" Of verdant boughs composed, to place a bier,
" And with the knight half-lifeless homeward speed,
" And in a tower enclose the cavalier;
" There dooms the guiltless stripling to remain,
" And suffer prisonment's perpetual pain.

XXIX.

" Yet nothing but his former liberty
" Thence to depart was wanting to the knight;
" In all the rest, as one at large and free,
" He ordered, and was still obeyed aright.
" But that ill dame her former phantasy
" Pursuing ever with unwearied sprite,
" Having the keys, repaired nigh every day
" To the close turret where the prisoner lay.

XXX.

" And evermore my brother she assailed,
" And with more boldness prest her former suit.
' Mark what to thee fidelity availed!'
(She cries,) ' which all mere perfidy repute.
' With what triumphant joy shalt thou be hailed!
What noble spoils are thine, what happy fruit!
' Oh what a worthy guerdon is thy meed!
' Branded by all men for a traitor's deed!

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XXXI.

'How well thou mightst have given, and without stain
'Of thine own honour, what I sought of thee!
'Now of so rigorous mood the worthy gain
'Have and enjoy. In close captivity
'Thou art; nor ever hope to break thy chain,
'Unless thou soften thy obduracy.
'But, if compliant, I a mean can frame
'To render thee thy liberty and fame.'

XXXII.

'No, no; have thou no hope,' (replied the knight,)
'That my true faith shall ever change, although
'It thus should happen that, against all right,
'I should so hard a sentence undergo.
'Let the world blame. Enough that in HIS sight,
'—Who sees and judges every thing below,
'And in HIS grace divine my fame can clear—
'My innocence unsullied shall appear.

XXXIII.

'Does not Argæus deem enough to sty
'Me in his prison, let him take away
'This noisome life. Nor yet may Heaven deny
'Its meed, though ill the world my work appay.
'And yet he who condemns me may, when I
'Am parted from this tenement of clay,
'Perceive that he has wronged me in the end,
'And shall bewail when dead his faithful friend.'

XXXIV.

"Thus oftentimes that shameless woman prest
"The good Philander, but obtained no fruit.
"Nursing her blind desires, which know not rest
"In seeking what her wicked love may boot,
"She her old vices, in her inmost breast,
"Ransacks for what may best the occasion suit,
"And sifts them all: then, having overrun
"A thousand evil thoughts, resolved on one.

XXXV.

"Six months she waited ere again she sought
"The prisoner's tower, as she was wont before:
"From which the sad Philander hoped and thought
"That love to him the dame no longer bore.
"Lo! Fortune for her an occasion wrought,
"(To evil deed propitious evermore)
"To give effect, with memorable ill,
"To her irrational and evil will.

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XXXVI.

" The husband had an ancient feud with one
" Who was by name Morando hight the fair ;
" Who even within the fort would often run
" In its lord's absence ; but the knight's repair
" At the wide distance of ten miles would shun,
" Was he assured the castellain was there :
" Who now, to lure him thither, bruited how
" He for Jerusalem was bound by vow.

XXXVII.

" Said he would go ; and went. Thus each who spies
" His outset, of his journey spreads the fame :
" Nor he, who only on his wife relies,
" Trusts any with his purpose but the dame,
" And home returned when dusky waxed the skies ;
" Nor ever, save at evening, thither came ;
" And with changed ensigns, at the dawn of day,
" Unseen of any, always went his way.

XXXVIII.

" He now on this, now on the other side,
" Roved round his castle but to ascertain
" If credulous Morando, who to ride
" Thither was wonted, would return again.
" All day he in the forest used to hide,
" And, when he saw the sun beneath the main,
" Came to the tower, and, through a secret gate,
" Was there admitted by his faithless mate.

XXXIX.

" Thus every one, except his consort ill,
" Argæus many miles away suppose :
" She, when 'tis time her errand to fulfil,
" Hatching new mischief, to my brother goes.
" Of tears she has a ready shower at will,
" Which from her eyes into her bosom flows.
' —Where shall I succour find, now needed most,
' So that my honour be not wholly lost,

XL.

' And, with my own, my wedded lord's ?' (she cries ;)
' I should feel no alarm, if he were here.
' Thou knowst Morando, know if deities
' Or men he in Argæus' absence fear.
' He at this time tries all extremities ;
' Nor servant have I but by threat or prayer
' He him to further his desire has swayed :
' Nor know I whither to recur for aid.

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XLI.

'Of my lord's absence hearing the report,
'And that he would not quickly homeward fare,
'He had the insolence within my court,
'Upon no other pretext to repair;
'Who, were my absent lord within his fort,
'So bold a deed not only would not dare,
'But would not deem himself secure withal,
'By Heaven! at three miles' distance from his wall.

XLII.

'And what he erst by messenger had sought,
'From me to-day has sued for face to face;
'And in such manner that long time I thought
'Dishonour must have followed and disgrace;
'And if I had not humbly him besought,
'And feigned to yield to him with ready grace,
'He haply would have ravish'd *that* by force,
'Which he expects to win by milder course.

XLIII.

'I promise, not designing to comply,
'For void is contract made in fear; alone
'From his ill purpose would I put him by,
'And what he then parforce would else have done.
'So stands the case: the single remedy
'Lies in yourself: my honour else is gone,
'And that of my Argæus; which as dear,
'Or more so, than your own you vowed whilere.

XLIV.

'If you refuse me, I shall say, you show
'That you have not the faith which you pretended,
'But that in cruelty you said me no,
'When vainly were my tears on you expended,
'And no wise for Argæus' sake, although
'With this pretext you have yourself defended.
'Our loves had been concealed and free from blame;
'But here I stand exposed to certain shame.'

XLV.

'To me such preface needs not (said anew
'The good Philander), bound by amity
'To my Argæus still; thy pleasure shew:
'I what I ever was will be, and I,
'Although from him I bear such ill undue,
'Accuse him not; for him would I defy
'Even death itself; and let the world, allied
'With my ill destiny, against me side!'

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XLVI.

" The impious woman answered, ' 'Tis my will
' Thou slay him who would do us foul despite;
' Nor apprehend to encounter any ill:
' For I the certain mean will tell aright.
' He will return, his purpose to fulfil,
' At the third hour, when darkest is the night;
' And, at a preconcerted signal made,
' Be without noise by me within conveyed.

XLVII.

' Let it not irk thee to await the peer
' Within my chamber, where no light will be.
' Till I shall make him doff his warlike gear,
' And, almost naked, yield him up to thee.
" So did his wife into that quicksand steer
" Her liapless husband (it appears to me)
" If wife she rightly could be called; more fell
" And cruel than a fury sprung from hell.

XLVIII.

" She drew my brother forth, that guilty night,
" With his good arms in hand, and him again
" Secreted in the chamber without light,
" Till thither came the wretched castellain.
" As it was ordered, all fell out aright,
" For seldom ill design is schemed in vain.
" So fell Argæus by Philander's sword,
" Who for Morando took the castle's lord.

XLIX.

" One blow divided head and neck: for nought
" Was there of helm, the warrior to defend.
" Without a struggle was Argæus brought
" To his unhappy life's disastrous end.
" And he who slew him never had such thought,
" Nor this would have believed: to aid his friend
" Intent, (strange chance!) he wrought him in that blow
" The worst that could be done by mortal foe.

L.

" When now, unknown, on earth Argæus lay,
" My brother to Gabrina gave the blade,
" (So was she named) who lived but to betray.
" She, who discovery had till then delayed,
" Wills that Philander with a light survey
" The man whom he on earth has lifeless laid,
" And she, with the assistance of the light,
" Shows him Argæus in the murdered wight.

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LI.

"And threatens, save he with desires comply
"To which her bosom had been long a prey,
"What he would be unable to deny
"She to the assembled household will display,
"And he like traitor and assassin die,
"Upon her tale, in ignominious way:
"And minds him fame is not to be despised,
"Albeit so little life by him be prized.

LII.

"Philander stood oppressed with grief and fear,
"When his mistake to him the woman showed,
"And to have slain her in his wrath went near,
"And long he doubted, so his choler glowed;
"And, but that Reason whispered in his ear
"That he was in an enemy's abode,
"For lack of faulchion in his empty sheath,
"He would have torn her piece-meal with his teeth.

LIII.

"As sometimes vessel by two winds which blow
"From different points is vext upon the main,
"And now one speeds the bark an end, and now
"Another squall impels her back again;
"Still on her poop assailed, or on her prow,
"Till she before the strongest flies amain:
"Philander, so distraught by two designs,
"Takes what he pregnant with least ill opines.

LIV.

"Reason demonstrates with what peril fraught
"His case, not more with death than lasting stain,
"If in the castle were that murder taught;
"Nor any time has he to sift his brain.
"Will he or nill he, in conclusion nought
"Is left him but the bitter cup to drain.
"Thus in his troubled heart prevailing more,
"His fear, his resolution overbore.

LV.

"The fear of shameful punishment's pursuit
"Made him with many protestations swear
"To grant in everything Gabrina's suit,
"If from the fortilage they safely fare.
"So plucks that impious dame, parforce, the fruit
"Of her desires, and thence retreat the pair.
"Thus home again the young Philander came,
"Leaving behind him a polluted name;

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LVI.

" And deeply graven in his bosom bore
" The image of his friend so rashly slain;
" By this to purchase, to his torment sore,
" A Progne, a Medea; impious gain!
" —And but his knightly faith, and oaths he swore,
" Were to his fury as a curbing rein,
" From him when safe she would have met her fate;
" But lived subjected to his bitterest hate.

LVII.

" Thenceforth he never more was seen to smile:
" All his discourse was sad, and still ensued
" Sobs from his breast; afflicted in the style
" Of vext Orestes, when he in his mood
" Had slain his mother and Egisthus vile:
" By vengeful furies for the deed pursued.
" Till broken by the ceaseless grief he fed,
" He sickened, and betook himself to bed.

LVIII.

" Now in the harlot, when she had discerned
" This other set by her so little store,
" The former amorous flame was quickly turned
" Into despiteous rage and hatred sore;
" Nor with less wrath she towards my brother burned
' Than for Argæus she had felt before;
" And she disposed herself, in treasons versed,
" To slay her second husband like the first.

LIX.

" Of a deceitful leech she made assay,[1]
" Well fitted for the work she had in hand,
" Who better knew what deadly poisons slay
" Than he the force of healing syrup scanned;
" And promised him his service to repay
" With a reward exceeding his demand,
" When he should, with some drink of deadly might,
" Of her detested husband rid her sight.

LX.

" In presence of myself and more beside,
" The wicked elder, with his deadly dole,
" Approaching my unhappy brother, cried,
" It was a sovereign drink to make him whole.'
" But here a new device Gabrina tried,
" And, ere the sickly man could taste the bowl,
" To rid her of accomplice in the deed,
" Or to defraud him of his promised meed,

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LXI.

" Seized on his hand, the instant he presented
" The poison to my brother. ' Ill my fear,
(Exclaimed the dame) ' by you would be resented,
' Excited for a spouse I hold so dear.
' I, that the beverage has not been fermented
' With evil drug and poisonous, will be clear;
' Nor deem it meet that you to him convey
' The proffered bowl, unless you take the 'say.'[6]

LXII.

" In what condition think you, sir, remained
" The wretched elder by his fears opprest?
" Thus by the woman's suddenness constrained,
" He had no time for thinking what were best.
" He, lest more doubt of him be entertained,
" Tastes of the chalice, at Gabrina's hest;
" And the sick man, emboldened so, drinks up
" All the remainder of the poisoned cup.[7]

LXIII.

" As the trained hawk of crooked talon who
" Clutches the partridge, when about to eat,
" Is by the dog, she deems her comrade true,
" O'ertaken and defrauded of the meat;
" So on ill gain intent, the leech, in lieu
" Of the expected aid, received defeat.
" Hear, thus, what sovereign wickedness will dare,
" And be like fate each greedy miscreant's share!

LXIV.

" This past and done, the leech would homeward speed,
" That he, to counteract the pest he bore
" Within his bowels, in this fearful need,
" Might use some secret of his cunning lore;
" But this the wicked dame would not concede,
" Forbidding him to issue thence before
" His patient's stomach should the juice digest,
" And its restoring power be manifest.[8]

LXV.

" No prayer will move, nor offered price will buy
" The woman's leave to let him thence depart.
" The desperate man who saw that death was nigh,
" And sure to follow, quickly changed his part;
" And told the story to the standers-by;
" Nor could she cover it with all her art.
" Thus what he wont to do by many a one,
" That goodly doctor by himself has done;

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LXVI.

"And follows with his soul my brother true,
"That hence, already freed, was gone before.
"We, the assistants, that the matter knew
"From the old man who lingered little more,
"Took that abominable monster, who
"More cruel was than beast in forest hoar,
"And, prisoned in a darksome place, reserved
"To perish in the fire, as she deserved."

LXVII.

So said Hermonides, and had pursued
His tale, and told how she from prison fled;
But suffered from his wound a pang so shrewd,
He fell reversed upon his grassy bed.
Meanwhile two squires, who served him in the wood,
A rustic bier of sturdy branches spread.
Their master upon this the servants lay,
Who could not thence be borne in other way.

LXVIII.

Zerbino, in excuse, assured the peer,
'He grieved so good a knight to have offended;
'But, as was still the use of cavalier,
'Had guarded her who in his guidance wended;
'Nor had he else preserved his honour clear:
'For when the dame was to his care commended,
'Her to defend his promise he had plight
'From all men, to the utmost of his might.

LXIX.

'He, if he might, in any thing beside,
'Would readily assist him in his need.'
—'His only wish,' (the cavalier replied,)
'Was, *he* might be from ill Gabrina freed,
'Ere him some mighty mischief should betide,
'Of future penitence the bitter seed.'
Gabrina keeps on earth her downcast eye;
For ill the simple truth admits reply.

LXX.

Zerbino thence, upon the promised way,
With the old woman in his escort, went,
And inly cursed her all the livelong day,
That in her cause that baron he had shent.
And having heard the knight her guilt display,
Who was instructed in her evil bent,
He—if before he had her at despite—
So loathed her, she was poison to his sight.

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LXXI.

Well read in young Zerbino's hate, the dame
Would not by him in malice be outdone,
Nor bated him an inch, but in that game
Of deadly hatred set him two for one.
Her face was with the venom in a flame
Wherewith her swelling bosom overrun.
'Twas thus and in such concord as I say,
These through the ancient wood pursued their way.

LXXII.

When, lo! as it is now nigh eventide,
They a mixt sound of blows and outcries hear,
Which seem a sign of battle fiercely plied,
And (as the deafening noise demonstrates) near.
To mark what this might be, towards that side
Whence came the tumult, moved the Scottish peer;
Nor is in following him Gabrina slow:
What chanced in other canto you shall know.

CANTO XXII.

ARGUMENT.

Atlantes' magic towers Astolpho wight
Destroys, and frees his thralls from prison-cell.
Bradamant finds Rogero, who in fight
O'erthrows four barons from the warlike sell;
When on their way to save an errant knight
Doomed to devouring fire: the four who fell
For impious Pinnabel maintained the strife,
Whom, after, Bradamant deprives of life.

I.

Ye courteous dames, and to your lovers dear,
You that are with one single love content;
Though, 'mid so many and many, it is clear
Right few of you are of such constant bent;
Be not displeased at what I said whilere,
When I so bitterly Gabrina shent,
Nor if I yet expend some other verse
In censure of the beldam's mind perverse.

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II.

Such was she; and I hide not what is true;
So was enjoined me for a task by one
Whose will is law; therefore is honour due
To constant heart throughout my story done.
He who betrayed his master to the Jew
For thirty pence, nor Peter wronged, nor John,
Nor less renowned is Hypermnestra's fame,
For her so many wicked sisters' shame.[1]

III.

For one I dare to censure in my lays,
For so the story wills which I recite,
On the other hand, a hundred will I praise,
And make their virtue dim the sun's fair light;
But turning to the various pile I raise,
(Gramercy! dear to many) of the knight
Of Scotland I was telling, who hard-by
Had heard, as was rehearsed, a piercing cry.

IV.

He entered, 'twixt two hills, a narrow way,
From whence was heard the cry; nor far had hied,
Ere to a vale he came shut out from day,
Where he before him a dead knight espied.
Who I shall tell; but first I must away
From France, in the Levant to wander wide
Till I the paladin Astolpho find,
Who westward had his course from thence inclined.

V.

I in the cruel city left the peer,
Whence, with the formidable bugle's roar,
He had chased the unfaithful people in their fear,
And had preserved himself from peril sore;
And with the sound had made his comrades rear
Their sail, and fly with noted scorn that shore.
Now following him, I say, the warrior took
The Armenian road, and so that land forsook.

VI.

He, after some few days, in Natoly
Finds himself, and towards Brusa goes his ways;
Hence wending, on the hither side o' the sea,
Makes Thrace; through Hungary by the Danube lays
His course, and, as his horse had wings to flee,
Traverses in less time than twenty days
Both the Moravian and Bohemian line:
Threaded Franconia next, and crost the Rhine.

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VII.

To Aix-la-Chapelle thence, through Arden's wood,
Came and embarked upon the Flemish strand.[2]
To sea, with southern breeze his vessel stood;
And, so the favouring wind her canvas fanned,
That he, at little distance, Albion viewed
By noon, and disembarked upon her land.
He backed his horse, and so the rowels plied,
In London he arrived by even-tide.

VIII.

Here, learning afterwards that Otho old
Has lain for many months in Paris-town,
And that anew nigh every baron bold
Has after his renowned example done,
He straightway does for France his sails unfold,
And to the mouth of Thames again is gone.
Whence issuing forth, with all his canvas spread,
For Calais he directs the galley's head.

IX.

A breeze which, from the starboard blowing light,
Had tempted forth Astolpho's bark to sea,
By little and by little, waxed in might,
And so at last obtains the mastery,
The pilot is constrained to veer outright,
Lest by the billows swampt his frigate be,
And he, departing from his first design,
Keeps the bark straight before the cresting brine.

X.

Now to the right, now to the other hand,
Sped by the tempest, through the foaming main,
The vessel ran; she took the happy land
At last nigh Rouen; and forthwith, in chain
And plate Astolpho cased, and girt with brand,
Bade put the saddle upon Rabicane;
Departed thence, and (what availed him more
Than thousands armed) with him his bugle bore;

XI.

And traversing a forest, at the feet
Of a fair hill, arrived beside a font,
What time the sheep foregoes his grassy meat,
Penned in the cabin or the hollow mount;
And, overcome by feverish thirst and heat,
Lifted the weighty morion from his front;
Tethered his courser in the thickest wood,
And, with intent to drink, approached the flood.

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XII.

His lips he had not wetted in its bed
Before a youthful rustic, ambushed near,
Sprang from a copse, backed Rabican, and fled
With the good courser of the cavalier.
Astolpho hears the noise and lifts his head,
And, when he sees his mighty loss so clear,
Satiate, although he has not drunk, upstarts,
And after the young churl in fury darts.

XIII.

That robber did not let the courser strain
At speed, or he had from the warrior shot;
But loosening now and tightening now the rein,
Fled at a gallop or a steady trot.
From the deep forest issued forth the twain,
After long round, and reached in fine the spot
Where so many illustrious lords were shent:
Worse prisoners they than if in prison pent!

XIV.

On Rabican, who with the wind might race,
The villain sped, within the enchanter's won.
Impeded by his shield and iron case,
Parforce Astolpho far behind him run;
Yet there arrives as well, but every trace
Of what the warrior had pursued is gone.
He neither Rabican nor thief can meet,
And vainly rolls his eyes and plies his feet.

XV.

He plies his feet, and searches still in vain
Throughout the house, hall, bower, or galleried rows:
Yet labours evermore, with fruitless pain
And care, to find the treacherous churl; nor knows
Where he can have secreted Rabicane,
Who every other animal outgoes:
And vainly searched all day the dome about,
Above, below, within it, and without.

XVI.

He, wearied and confused with wandering wide,
Perceived the place was by enchantment wrought,
And of the book he carried at his side,
By Logistilla given in India, thought;
Bestowed, should new enchantment him betide,
That needful succour might therein be sought.
He to the index turns, and quickly sees
What pages show the proper remedies.

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XVII.

I' the book, of that enchanted house at large
Was written, and in this was taught the way
To foil the enchanter, and to set at large
The different prisoners, subject to his sway.
'Of these illusions and these frauds in charge,
'A spirit pent beneath the threshold lay;
'And the stone raised which kept him fast below,
'With him the palace into smoke would go.'

XVIII.

Astolpho with desire to bring to end
An enterprise so passing fair, delays
No more, but to the task his force does bend,
And prove how much the heavy marble weighs,
As old Atlantes sees the knight intend
To bring to scorn his art and evil ways,
Suspicious of the ill which may ensue,
He moves to assail him with enchantments new.

XIX.

He, with his spells and shapes of devilish kind,
Makes the duke different from his wont appear;
To one a giant, and to one a hind,
To other an ill-visaged cavalier;
Each, in the form which in the thicket blind
The false enchanter wore, beholds the peer.
So that they all, with purpose to have back
What the magician took, the duke attack.

XX.

The Child,* Gradasso, Iroldo, Bradamant,
Prasildo, Brandimart, and many more,
All, cheated by this new illusion, pant
To slay the English baron, angered sore:
But he abased their pride and haughty vaunt,
Who straight bethought him of the horn he bore.
But for the succour of its echo dread,
They, without fail, had laid Astolpho dead.

XXI.

But he no sooner has the bugle wound
And poured a horrid larum, than in guise
Of pigeons at the musquet's scaring sound,
The troop of cavaliers affrighted flies.
No less the necromancer starts astound,
No less he from his den in panic hies;
Troubled and pale, and hurrying evermore
Till out of hearing of the horrid roar.

* Rogero.

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XXII.

The warder fled; with him his prisoned train,
And many steeds as well are fled and gone;
(These more than rope is needed to restrain,
Who after their astounded masters run,
Scared by the sound; nor cat nor mouse remain)
Who seem to hear in it, '*Lay on, lay on.*'
Rabican with the rest had broke his bands,
But that he fell into Astolpho's hands.

XXIII.

He, having chased the enchanter Moor away,
Upraised the heavy threshold from the ground;
Beneath which, figures and more matters lay,
That I omit; desirous to confound
The spell which did the magic dome upstay,
The duke made havoc of whate'er he found,
As him the book he carried taught to do:
And into mist and smoke all past from view.

XXIV.

There he found fastened by a golden chain
Rogero's famous courser, *him* I say
Given by the wizard, that to the domain
Of false Alcina him he might convey:
On which, equipt with Logistilla's rein,
To France Rogero had retraced his way,
And had from Ind to England rounded all
The right-hand side of the terrestrial ball.

XXV.

I know not if you recollect how tied
To a tree Rogero left his rein, the day
Galaphron's naked daughter from his side
Vanished, and him did with that scorn appay.
The courser, to his wonder who espied,
Returned to him whom he was used to obey;
Beneath the old enchanter's care to dwell,
And stayed with him till broken was the spell.

XXVI.

At nought Astolpho could more joyous be
Than this; of all things fortunate the best:
In that the hippogryph so happily
Offered himself; that he might scour the rest
(As much he coveted) of land and sea,
And in few days the ample world invest.
Him well he knew, how fit for his behoof;
For of his feats he had elsewhere made proof.

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XXVII.

Him he that day in India proved, when sped
He was by sage Melissa, from the reign
Of that ill woman who him, sore bested,
Had changed from man to myrtle on the plain:
Had marked and noted how his giddy head
Was formed by Logistilla to the rein;
And saw how well instructed by her care
Rogero was, to guide him every where.

XXVIII.

Minded to take the hippogryph, he flung
The saddle on him, which lay near, and bitted
The steed, by choosing, all the reins among,
This part or that, until his mouth was fitted:
For in that place were many bridles hung,
Belonging to the coursers which had flitted.
And now alone, intent upon his flight,
The thought of Rabicane detained the knight.

XXIX.

Good cause he had to love that Rabicane,
For better horse was not to run with lance,
And him had he from the remotest reign
Of India ridden even into France:
After much thought, he to some friend would fain
Present him, rather than so, left to chance,
Abandon there the courser, as a prey
To the first stranger who should pass that way.

XXX.

He stood upon the watch if he could view
Some hunter in the forest, or some hind,
To whom he might commit the charge, and who
Might to some city lead the horse behind.
He waited all that day and till the new
Had dawned, when, while the twilight yet was blind,
He thought he saw, as he expecting stood,
A cavalier approaching through the wood.

XXXI.

But it behoves that, ere the rest I say,
I Bradamant and good Rogero find.
After the horn had ceased, and, far away,
The beauteous pair had left the dome behind,
Rogero looked, and knew what till that day
He had seen not, by Atlantes rendered blind.
Atlantes had effected by his power,
They should not know each other till that hour.

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XXXII.

Rogero looks on Bradamant, and she
Looks on Rogero in profound surprise
That for so many days that witchery
Had so obscured her altered mind and eyes.
Rejoiced, Rogero clasps his lady free,
Crimsoning with deeper than the rose's dyes,
And his fair love's first blossoms, while he clips
The gentle damsel, gathers from her lips.

XXXIII.

A thousand times they their embrace renew,
And closely each is by the other prest;
While so delighted are those lovers two,
Their joys are ill contained within their breast.
Deluded by enchantments, much they rue
That while they were within the wizard's rest,
They should not e'er have one another known,
And have so many happy days foregone.

XXXIV.

The gentle Bradamant, who was i' the vein
To grant whatever prudent virgin might,
To solace her desiring lover's pain,
So that her honour should receive no slight;
—'If the last fruits he of her love would gain,
'Nor find her ever stubborn,' bade the knight,
'Her of Duke Aymon through fair mean demand;
'But be baptized before he claimed her hand.'

XXXV.

Rogero good, who not alone to be
A christian for the love of her were fain,
As his good sire had been, and anciently
His grandsire and his whole illustrious strain,
But for her pleasure would immediately
Resign whatever did of life remain,
Says, "I not only, if 'tis thy desire,
"Will be baptised by water, but by fire.

XXXVI.

Then on his way to be baptized he hied,
That he might next espouse the martial may,
With Bradamant; who served him as a guide
To Vallombrosa's fane,[3] an abbey gray,
Rich, fair, nor less religious, and beside,
Courteous to whosoever passed that way;
And they encountered, issuing from the chase,
A woman, with a passing woful face.

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XXXVII.

Rogero, as still courteous, still humane
To all, but woman most, when he discerned
Her dainty visage furrowed by a rain
Of lovely tears, sore pitied her, and burned
With the desire to know her grievous pain;
And having to the mournful lady turned.
Besought her, after fair salute, to show
What cause had made her eyes thus overflow.

XXXVIII.

And she, uplifting their moist rays and bright,
Most kindly to the inquiring child replied;
And of the cause of her unhappy plight,
Him, since he sought it, fully satisfied.
"Thou hast to understand, O gentle knight,
"My visage is so bathed with tears," she cried,
"In pity to a youth condemned to die
"This very day, within a town hard by.

XXXIX.

"Loving a gentle lady and a gay,
"The daughter of Marsilius, king of Spain,
"And feigning, veiled in feminine array,
"The modest roll of eye and girlish strain,
"With her each night the amorous stripling lay,
"Nor any had suspicion of the twain:
"But nought so hidden is, but searching eye
"In the long run the secret will espy.

XL.

"One first perceived it, and then spake with two,
"Those two with more, till to the king 'twas said;
"Of whom but yesterday a follower true
"Gave order to surprise the pair in bed,
"And in the citadel the prisoners mew,
"To separate dungeons in that fortress led;
"Nor think I that enough of day remains
"To save the lover from his cruel pains.

XLI.

"I fled, not to behold such cruelty,
"For they alive the wretched youth will burn;
"Nor think I aught could more afflicting be
"Than such fair stripling's torment to discern.
"Or that hereafter thing can pleasure me
"So much, but that it will to trouble turn,
"If memory retrace the cruel flame
"Which preyed upon his fair and dainty frame."

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XLII.

Touched deeply, Bradamant his danger hears,
In heart sore troubled at the story shown;
As anxious for the lover, it appears,
As if he were a brother of her own:
Nor certes wholly causeless are her fears,
As in an after-verse will be made known.
Then to Rogero; "Him to keep from harms,
"Meseems we worthily should turn our arms."

XLIII.

And to that melancholy damsel said;
"Place us but once within the walls, and I,
"So that the youth be not already dead,
"Will be your warrant that he shall not die."
Rogero, who the kindly bosom read
Of Bradamant, still full of piety,
Felt himself burn all over with desire
To snatch the unhappy stripling from the fire.

XLIV.

And to the maid, whose troubled face appears
Bathed with a briny flood, "Why wait we?—need
"Is here of speedy succour, not of tears.
"Do you but where the youth is prisoned lead;
"Him from a thousand swords, a thousand spears,
"We vow to save; so it be done with speed.
"But haste you, lest too tardy be our aid,
"And he be burnt, while succour is delayed."

XLV.

The haughty semblance and the lofty say
Of these, who with such wondrous daring glowed,
That hope, which long had ceased to be her stay,
Again upon the grieving dame bestowed:
But, for she less the distance of the way
Dreaded, than interruption of the road,
Lest they, through this, should take that path in vain,
The damsel stood suspended and in pain.

XLVI.

Then said: "If to the place our journey lay
"By the high road, which is both straight and plain,
"That we in time might reach it, I should say,
"Before the fire was lit; but we must strain
"By path so foul and crooked. that a day
"To reach the city would suffice with pain;
"And when, alas! we thither shall have sped,
"I fear that we shall find the stripling dead.

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XLVII.

"And wherefore take we not the way most near?"
Rogero answers; and the dame replies,
"Because fast by where we our course should steer,
"A castle of the Count of Poictiers lies:
"Where Pinnabel for dame and cavalier
"Did, three days past, a shameful law devise;
"Than whom more worthless living wight is none
"The Count Anselmo d'Altaripa's son.

XLVIII.

"No cavalier or lady by that rest
"Without some noted scorn and injury goes;
"Both of their coursers here are dispossest,
"And knight his arms and dame her gown foregoes.'
"No better cavaliers lay lance in rest,
"Nor have for years in France against their foes,
"Than four, who for Sir Pinnabel have plight
"Their promise to maintain the castle's right.

XLIX.

"Whence first arose the usage, which began
"But three days since, you now, sir knight, shall hear;
"And shall the cause, if right or evil, scan,
"Which moved the banded cavaliers to swear.
"So ill a lady has the Castellan,*
"So wayward, that she is without a peer:
"Who, on a day, as with the count she went,
"I know not whither, by a knight was shent.

L.

"This knight, as flouted by that bonnibel,
"For carrying on his croup an ancient dame,
"Encountered with her champion Pinnabel,
"Of overweening pride and little fame:
"Him he o'erturned, made her alight as well,
"And put her to the proof, if sound or lame;
"—Left her on foot, and had that woman old
"In the dismounted damsel's garment stoled.

LI.

"She, who remained on foot, in fell despite,
"Greedy of vengeance, and athirst for ill,
"Leagued with the faithless Pinnabel, a wight
"All evil prompt to further and fulfil,
"Says 'she shall never rest by day nor night,
'Nor ever know a happy hour, until
'A thousand knights and dames are dispossest
'Of courser, and of armour, and of vest.'

* Pinnabel.

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LII.

" Four puissant knights arrived that very day
" It happened, at a place of his, and who
" Had all of them from regions far away
" Come lately to those parts: so many true
" And valiant warriors, skilled in martial play,
" Our age has seen not. These the goodly crew:
" Guido the savage, but a stripling yet,
" Gryphon, and Aquilant, and Sansonet!

LIII.

' Them at the fortilage, of which I told,
" Sir Pinnabel received with semblance fair,
" Next seized the ensuing night the warriors bold
" In bed, nor loosed, till he had made them swear
' That (he such period fixt) they in his hold
' Should be his faithful champions for a year
' And month; and of his horse and arms deprive
' Whatever cavalier should there arrive.

LIV.

" And any damsel whom the stranger bore
" With him, dismount, and strip her of her vest.
" So, thus surprised, the warlike prisoners swore;
" So were constrained to observe the cruel hest,
" Though grieved and troubled: nor against the four,
" It seems, can any joust, but veils his crest.
" Knights infinite have come; but one and all,
" Afoot and without arms have left that Hall.

LV.

" Their order is, who from the castle hies,
" The first by lot, shall meet the foe alone,
' But if he find a champion of such guise
' As keeps the sell, while he himself is thrown,
' The rest must undertake the enterprise,
' Even to the death, against that single one,
' Ranged in a band. If such each single knight,
' Imagine the assembled warriors' might!

LVI.

" Nor stands it with our haste, which all delay,
" All let forbids, that you beside that tower
" Be forced to stop and mingle in the fray:
" Nor grant that you be conquerors in the stower,
" (And as your presence warrants well, you may,)
" 'Tis not a thing concluded in an hour.
" And if all day he wait our succour, I
" Much fear the stripling in the fire will die."

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LVII.

"Regard we not this hindrance of our quest,"
Rogero cried; "But do we what we may!
"Let HIM who rules the heavens ordain the rest,
"Or Fortune, if he leave it in her sway;
"To you shall by this joust be manifest
"If we can aid the youth; for whom to-day
"They on a ground so causeless and so slight,
"As you to us rehearsed, the fire will light."

LVIII.

Rogero ceased; and in the nearest way
The damsel put the pair without reply:
Nor these beyond three miles had fared, when they
Reached bridge and gate, the place of forfeitry,
Of horse and arms and feminine array,
With peril sore of life. On turret high,
Upon first sight of them, a sentinel
Beat twice upon the castle's larum-bell.

LIX.

And lo, in eager hurry from the gate
An elder trotting on a hackney made!
And he approaching cried, "Await, await!
"—Hola! halt, sirs, for here a fine is paid:
"And I to you the usage shall relate,
"If this has not to you before been said."
And to the three forthwith began to tell
The use established there by Pinnabel.

LX.

He next proceeds, as he had wont before
To counsel other errant cavalier.
"Unrobe the lady," (said that elder hoar,)
"My sons, and leave your steeds and martial gear;
"Nor put yourselves in peril, and with four
"Such matchless champions hazard the career.
"Clothes, arms, and coursers every where are rife;
"But not to be repaired is loss of life."

LXI.

"—No more!" (Rogero said,) "No more! for I
"Am well informed of all, and thither speed
"With the intention, here by proof to try
"If, what my heart has vouched, I am in deed.
"For sign or threat I yield not panoply,
"If nought beside I hear, nor vest nor steed.
"And this my comrade, I as surely know,
"These for mere words as little will forego.

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LXII.

"But let me face to face, by Heaven, espy
"Those who would take my horse and arms away;
"For we have yet beyond that hill to hie,
"And little time can here afford to stay."
"Behold the man," that ancient made reply,
"Clear of the bridge!"—Nor did in this missay;
For thence a warrior pricked, who, powdered o'er
With snowy flowers, a crimson surcoat wore.

LXIII.

Bradamant for long time with earnest prayer,
For courtesy the good Rogero prest,
'To let her from his sell the warrior bear,
'Who with white flowers had purfled o'er his vest.'
But moved him not; and to Rogero's share
Must leave, and do herself, what liked him best.
He willed the whole emprize his own should be,
And Bradamant should stand apart to see.

LXIV.

The child demanded of that elder, who
Was he that from the gate first took his way,
And he, "'Tis Sansonet; of crimson hue,
"I know his surcoat, with white flowrets gay."
Without a word exchanged, the warlike two
Divide the ground, and short is the delay.
For they against each other, levelling low
Their spears, and hurrying sore their coursers, go.

LXV.

This while had issued from the fortress near,
With many footmen girt, Sir Pinnabel,
All ready to despoil the cavalier,
Who in the warlike joust should void his sell.
At one another spurred in bold career
The knights, with their huge lances rested well.
Up to the points nigh equal was each stick,
Of stubborn native oak, and two palms thick.

LXVI.

Sansonet, of such staves, above five pair
Had made them sever from the living stock,
In neighbouring wood, and bade his followers bear
Two of them hither, destined for that shock:
Such truncheons to withstand, well needed were
A shield and cuirass of the diamond rock.
One he had made them give his foe, and one
He kept himself, the present course to run.

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LXVII.

With these which might the solid anvil bore,
(So well their ends were pointed) there and here,
Each aiming at the shield his foeman wore,
The puissant warriors shocked in mid career.
That of Rogero, wrought with magic lore,
By fiends, had little from the stroke to fear:
I of the buckler speak Atlantes made,
Of whose rare virtues I whilere have said.

LXVIII.

I have already said, the enchanted light
Strikes with such force on the beholder's eyes,
That, at the shield's discovery, every wight
Is blinded, or on earth half lifeless lies.
Wherefore, well mantled with a veil, the knight
Keeps it, unless some pressing need surprise:
Impassive is the shield as well believed,
Since it no damage in the shock received.

LXIX.

The other by less skilful artist wrought,
Did not so well that weightiest blow abide,
But, as if smit by thunder, in a thought,
Gave way before the steel, and opened wide;
Gave way before the griding steel, which sought
The arm beneath, by this ill fortified:
So that Sir Sansonet was smote, and reeled,
In his despite, unhorsed upon the field.

LXX.

And this was the first comrade of the train
That of the tower maintained the usage fell,
Who there had failed another's spoil to gain,
And voided in the joust his knightly sell.
Who laughs, as well will sometimes have to plain,
And find that Fortune will by fits rebel.
Anew the warder on his larum beats,
And to the other knights the sign repeats.

LXXI.

This while Sir Pinnabello had drawn near
To Bradamant, and prayed that she would shew
'What warrior had his knight in the career
'Smit with such prowess.' That the guerdon due
To his ill deeds might wait the cavalier,
God's justice that ill-doer thither drew
On the same courser, which before the Cheat
From Bradamant had taken by deceit.

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LXXII.

'Twas now exactly the eighth month was ended,
Since, if you recollect, upon his way,
The faithless Maganzese, with whom she wended,
Cast into Merlin's tomb the martial may;
When her a bough, which fell with her, defended
From death, or her good Fortune, rather say;
And Pinnabel bore off her courser brave
Deeming the damsel buried in the cave.

LXXIII.

The courser, and, through him, the cavalier,
Bradamant knew to be the wicked Count,
And, having heard him, and perused him near,
With more attentive eye and front to front—
"This is the man," (the damsel said) "'tis clear,
"Who erst designed me outrage and affront.
"Lo! him the traitor's sin doth hither speed,
"Of all his treasons to receive the meed."

LXXIV.

To threaten him with vengeance, and to lay
Hands on her sword and charge him home, was done
All in a thought; but first she barred the way
By which he might his fortilage have won.
To earth himself like fox, in his dismay,
Sir Pinnabel has every hope forgone.
He screaming loud, nor ever making head
Against the damsel, through the forest fled.

LXXV.

Pale and dismayed his spurs the caitiff plied
Whose last hope of escape in flight was found;
While with her ready sword, Dordona's pride
Was at his flank, and prest him in his round,
Hunting him close and ever fast beside;
Loud is the uproar, and the woods resound.
Nothing of this is at the castle kenned,
For only to Rogero all attend.

LXXVI.

The other three, who from the fortress came,
This while had issued forth upon their way
And brought with them the ill-accustomed dame,
Who made wayfarers that ill use obey.
In all (who rather than prolong with blame
Their life, would choose to perish in the fray)
The kindling visage burns, and heart is woe,
That to assail one man so many go.

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LXXVII.

The cruel courtezan by whom was made,
And by whose hest maintained, that evil rite,
Reminds the warriors that they are arrayed
By oath and pact, to avenge her in the fight.
"If with his lance alone thy foes are laid
"On earth, why should I band with other knight?"
(Guido the savage said) "and if I lie,
"Off with my head, for I consent to die."

LXXVIII.

So Aquilant; so Gryphon. For the twain
Singly against a single foe would run;
And rather would be taken, rather slain,
Than he should be assailed by more than one.
To them exclaimed the woman: "Why in vain
"Waste you so many words, where fruit is none?
"I brought you here that champion's arms to take,
"Not other laws and other pacts to make.

LXXIX.

"You should have offered, when in prison cell,
"This your excuse; which now too late is made.
"'Tis yours the law's observance to compel,
"And not with lying tongue your oath evade."
"—Behold! the arms; behold, with a new sell
"And cloth, the goodly steed!" Rogero said,
"Behold with these, as well, the damsel's vest!
"If these you covet, why your course arrest?"

LXXX.

She of the castle presses on *this* side,
On *that* Rogero rates, and calls them on;
Till they parforce, t'wards him, together hied:
But red with shame, are to the encounter gone,
Foremost appeared 'mid those three knights of pride,
Of Burgundy's good marquis either son.*
But Guido, who was borne on heavier steed,
Came at some interval, with tardier speed.

LXXXI.

With the same lance with which he overbore
Sir Sansonet, Rogero came to fight;
Well-covered with the shield which heretofore
Atlantes used on Pyrenean height;
I say the enchanted buckler, which, too sore
For human sufferance, dazed the astonished sight:
To which Rogero, as a last resource,
In the most pressing peril had recourse.

* Gryphon and Aquilant.

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LXXXII.

Although three times alone the child was fain
(And, certes sore bested) this to display;
Twice when he from the wanton Fairy's reign
Was to that soberer region on his way!
Last, when the unsated Orc upon the main,
By this astounded, 'mid the sea-foam lay;
Which would have fed upon the naked maid,
So cruel to the Child who brought her aid.

LXXXIII.

Save these three times, he has preserved the shield
Beneath its veil, but covered in such wise
That it may quickly be to sight revealed,
If he in need of its good succour lies.
With this, as said before, he came a-field
As boldly, as if those three enemies,
Who were arrayed before him, had appeared
Yet less than little children to be feared.

LXXXIV.

Rogero shocked the valiant Gryphon, where
The border of the buckler joined the sight,
Who seemed as he would fall, now here, now there,
And, from his courser far, last fell outright.
He at the shield had aimed, but smote not fair
The mark; and (for Rogero's orb was bright
And smooth) the hissing weapon slipt, and wrought
Other effect than was in Gryphon's thought.

LXXXV.

It rent and tore the veil which served to hide
The lightning's fearful and enchanted rays;
Which, without blinded eyes, can none abide
Upright, nor refuge is for them who gaze.
Aquilant, who was at his brother's side,
Tore off the rest, and made the buckler blaze:
The splendour struck the valiant brothers blind,
And Guido in their rear, who spurred behind.

LXXXVI.

These here, or there, to earth astonished reel;
Nor eyes alone are dazzled by the light,
But every sense astounds the flaming steel.
Unconscious of the issue of the fight,
Rogero turned his horse, and, in the wheel,
Handled his sword, so good to thrust and smite;
And none descried his fury to oppose;
For in the charge dismounted were his foes.

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LXXXVII.

The knights, together with the footmen all,
And women, who had from the castle hied,
Nor less the coursers panting with their fall,
As if about to die, the warrior spied.
He wondered first, and next perceived the pall
Of silk was hanging down on the left side;
I say the pall, in which he used to lap
His shield, the evil cause of that mishap,

LXXXVIII.

He quickly turns, and, turning, rolls his eyes,
In hopes to view his well-loved martial maid;
And thitherward, without delay, he hies
Where, when the joust began, the damsel stayed.
Not finding her, it is the child's surmise
That she is gone to bear the stripling aid;
Fearing he may be burnt, while they their journey
So long delay, retarded by that tourney.

LXXXIX.

He saw the damsel, stretched among the rest
Who him had thither guided: as she lay,
He took and placed her, yet with sleep opprest,
Before him, and, sore troubled, rode away.
He with a mantle, which above her vest
She wore, concealed the enchanted buckler's ray:
And to the maid restored, when 'twas concealed,
Her senses, which were ravished by the shield.

XC.

Away Rogero posted with the dame,
And did not dare his crimsoned visage raise;
Since every one, it seemed to him, might blame
With right that victory, worthy little praise.
"By what amends can I of such a shame
"(The blushing warrior said) the stain eraze?
"For 'twill be bruited, all my deeds by sleight
"Of magic have been done, and not by might."

XCI.

As, thinking thus, he journeyed on his way,
Rogero stumbled upon what he sought;
For, in the middle of the track, there lay
A well, within the ground profoundly wrought:
Whither the thirsty herd, at noon of day,
Repaired, their paunches with green forage fraught.
Rogero said, "'Tis now, must I provide,
"I shame from thee, O shield, no more abide.

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XCII.

"Thee will I keep no more, and this shall be
"Even the last shame which so on me is thrown:"
The child so ending his self-colloquy,
Dismounting, takes a large and heavy stone;
Which to the shield he ties, and bodily
Both to the bottom of the well are gone.
"Lie buried there for ever, from all eyes,
"And with thee hidden be my shame!" he cries.

XCIII.

Filled to the brim with water was the well;
Heavy the stone, and heavy was the shield:
Nor stopt they till they to the bottom fell,
By the light, liquid element concealed.
Fame was not slow the noble act to swell,
But, wandering wide, the deed in brief revealed,
And voicing it abroad, with trumpet-sound,
Told France and Spain and all the countries round.

XCIV.

When that so strange adventure to the rest
Of the wide world, from mouth to mouth was blown,
Knights out of number undertook the quest,
From neighbouring parts and distant; but unknown
To all remained the forest which possessed
The spring wherein the virtuous shield was thrown:
For she who told the action, would not say
Where was the well, nor in what land it lay.

XCV.

Upon Rogero's parting thence, where fell
The four good champions of that evil law,
Made by the castle's lord Sir Pinnabel,
By him discomfited like men of straw,
—The shield withdrawn—he had removed as well
The light, which quelled *their* sight and minds who saw;
And those, who, like dead men, on earth had lain,
Had risen, full of wonderment, again.

XCVI.

Nor any thing throughout that livelong day
They 'mid themselves but that strange case relate;
And how it was in that disastrous fray
Each by the horrid light was quelled, debate.
While these, discoursing, of the adventure say,
Tidings are brought of Pinabello's fate.
That Pinnabel is dead the warriors hear,
But learn not who had slain the cavalier.

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XCVII.

Bradamant in close pass, this while, had staid
The faithless Pinnabel, and sorely prest;
And many times had buried half her blade
Within his bleeding flanks and heaving breast.
When of his crimes the forfeit had been paid
By him, the infected country's curse and pest,
She from the conscious forest turned away
With that good steed the thief had made his prey.

XCVIII.

She would return where she had left the knight,
But never could make out the road anew;
And now by valley, now by mountain-height,
Wandered well-nigh the ample country through.
Yet could she never (such her fortune's spite)
Find out the way to join Rogero true.
Him in another canto I attend
Who loves the tale, to hear my story's end.

CANTO XXIII.

ARGUMENT.

Astolpho soars in air. Upon account
Of Pinnabel is prisoned Scotland's heir:
By Roland freed. Frontino Rodomont
Takes from Hippalca, trusted to her care.
With Mandricardo strives Aglantes' count:
Who, next, offended by his lady fair,
Into the fury falls, so strange and fell,
Which in the world has not a parallel.

I.

Let each assist the other in his need;
Seldom good actions go without their due;
And if their just reward should not succeed,
At least, nor death, nor shame, nor loss ensue.
Who wrongs another, the remembered meed
As well shall have, and soon or later rue.
That 'mountains never meet, but that men may,
'And oft encounter,' is an ancient say.

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II.

Now mark what chanced to Pinnabel, the event
Of having borne himself so wickedly:
He at the last received due punishment,
Due and deserved by his iniquity.
And God, who for the most is ill content
To see the righteous suffer wrongfully,
Secured the maid from harm, and will secure
All who from every wickedness are pure.

III.

Pinnabel deemed he to an end had brought,
And buried deep in earth, the martial maid:
Nor weening to behold her more, less thought
To her his treason's forfeit to have paid.
Nor profits it the wily traitor aught
To be among the forts his father swayed.
For Altaripa here its summit rears,
Amid rude hills, confining on Poictiers.

IV.

Anselm in Altaripa held command,
The count from whom was sprung this evil seed:
Who, to escape from angry Clermont's hand,
Of friends and of assistance stood in need.
At a hill's foot, with her avenging brand,
Bradamant made the worthless traitor bleed;
Who found no better succour in the strife
Than piteous cry and fruitless prayer for life.

V.

When she has put to death the treacherous peer,
Who to put her to death had erst intent,
To seek Rogero she again would steer,
But that her cruel fate would not consent;
Which, where the wood was loneliest and most drear,
To wander by close path the lady sent,
Until the western sun withdrew his light,
Abandoning the world above to night.

VI.

Nor knowing where for shelter she should rove,
Bradamant in that place resolves to stay,
Couched on the verdant herbage of the grove;
And, sleeping, now awaits the dawn of day,
Now watching Saturn, Venus, Mars, and Jove,
And the other wandering gods upon their way:
But, whether waking or to sleep resigned,
Has aye Rogero present to her mind.

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VII.

With sorrow and repentance oft assailed,
She from her inmost heart profoundly sighed,
That Anger over Love should have prevailed.
"Anger has torn me from my love," (she cried,)
"Oh! had I made some note, which had availed,
"Thither, whence I set out, my steps to guide,
"When I departed on my ill emprise!
"Sure I was lorn of memory and of eyes!"

VIII.

These words and others she in mournful strain
Utters, and broods within her heart on more.
Meanwhile a wind of sighs, and plenteous rain
Of tears, are tokens of her anguish sore.
In the east, at last, expected long in vain,
The wished-for twilight streaked the horizon o'er;
And she her courser took, which on the ley
Was feeding, and rode forth to meet the day.

IX.

Nor far had rode, ere from the greenwood-trees
She issued, where the dome was erst displayed;
And many days her with such witcheries
The evil-minded wizard had delayed.
Here she Astolpho found, who at full ease
A bridle for the Hippogryph had made,
And here was standing, thoughtful and in pain
To whom he should deliver Rabicane.

X.

By chance she found him, as the cavalier
Had from the helm uncased his head to view;
So that when of the dingy forest clear,
Fair Bradamant her gentle cousin knew.
Him from afar she hailed with joyful cheer,
And now more nigh, to embrace the warrior flew;
And named herself, and raised her vizor high,
And let him plainly who she was espy.

XI.

None could Astolpho have found any where
With whom to leave his horse with more content,
As knowing she would guard the steed with care,
And to his lord on his return present;
And he believed that Heaven had, in its care,
Duke Aymon's daughter for this purpose sent.
Her was he wont with pleasure aye to see;
But now with more in his necessity.

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XII.

Embracing twice or thrice the cousins stand,
Fraternally, each other's neck, and they
Had of each other's welfare made demand
With much affection, ere the duke 'gan say;
"Would I now see the winged people's land,
"Here upon earth I make too long delay."
And opening to the dame the thought he brewed,
To her the flying horse Astolpho shewed.

XIII.

But she scarce marvelled when above the plain
She saw the rising steed his wings unfold;
Since upon former time, with mastering rein,
On him had charged the dame that wizard old;
And made her eye and eyelid sorely strain,
So hard she gazed, his movements to behold;
The day that he bore off, with wondrous range,
Rogero on his journey, long and strange.

XIV.

Astolpho says, 'On her he will bestow
'His Rabican; so passing swift of kind,
'That, if the courser started when a bow
'Was drawn, he left the feathered shaft behind,
'And will as well his panoply forego,
'That it may to Mount Alban be consigned:
'And she for him preserve the martial weed;
'Since of his arms he has no present need.'

XV.

Bent, since a course in air was to be flown,
That he, as best he can, will make him light.
Yet keeps the sword and horn; although alone
The horn from every risk might shield the knight:
But he the lance abandons, which the son
Of Galaphron* was wont to bear in fight;
The lance, by which whoever in the course
Was touched, fell headlong hurtling from his horse.

XVI.

Backed by Astolpho, and ascending slow,
The hippogryph through yielding æther flew;
And next the rider stirred the courser so,
That in a thought he vanished out of view.
Thus with his pilot does the patron go,
Fearing the gale and rock, till he is through
The reefs; then, having left the shore behind,
Hoists every sail, and shoots before the wind.

* Argalia.

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XVII.

Bradamant, when departed was the peer,
Remained distressed in mind; since in what way
She knew not her good kinsman's warlike gear
And courser to Mount Alban to convey.
For on her heart, which they inflame and tear,
The warm desire and greedy will yet prey
To see the Child; whom she to find once more
At Vallombrosa thought, if not before.

XVIII.

Here standing in suspense, by chance she spied
A churl, that came towards her on the plain,
Who, at her hest, Astolpho's armour tied,
As best he might, and laid on Rabicane;
She next behind her bade the peasant guide
(One courser loaded and one loose) the twain.
Two were the steeds: for she had *that* before,
On which his horse from Pinnabel she bore.

XIX.

To Vallombrosa to direct her way
She thought, in hopes to find Rogero there:
But, fearing evermore to go astray,
Knew not how thither she might best repair.
The churl had of the country small assay,
And, sure to be bewildered, wend the pair:
Yet at a venture thitherward she hies,
Where she believes the place of meeting lies.

XX.

She here and there, as she her way pursued,
Turned, but found none to question of the road;
She saw at mid-day, issuing from the wood,
A fort, nor far removed was the abode,
Which on the summit of a mountain stood,
And to the lady like Mount Alban showed:
And was Mount Alban sure; in which repair
One of her brothers and her mother were.

XXI.

She, when she recognized the place, became
Sadder at heart than I have power to say.
If she delays, discovered is the dame,
Nor thence will be allowed to wend her way:
If thence she wends not, of the amorous flame
Which so consumes her, she will be the prey,
Nor see Rogero more, nor compass aught
Which was at Vallombrosa to be wrought.

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XXII.

Some deal she doubted: then to turn her steed,
Resolved upon Mount Alban's castle near;
And, for she thence her way could deftly read,
Her course anew towards the abbey steer.
But Fortune, good or evil, had decreed
The maid, before she of the vale was clear,
Of one of her good brethren should be spied,
Alardo named, ere she had time to hide.

XXIII.

He came from billeting the bands which lay
Dispersed about that province, foot and horse;
For the surrounding district, to obey
King Charlemagne, had raised another force.
Embraces brotherly and friendly say,
Salutes and kindly cheer, ensue of course;
And next into Mount Alban, side by side,
They, communing of many matters, ride.

XXIV.

Bradamant enters Montalbano's seat,
Whom Beatrice* had mourned, and vainly sought
Through spacious France: 'Tis here all welcome sweet,
The kiss and clasp of hand she holds at nought,
While her a mother and a brother greet,
As the enamoured maid compares in thought
These with the loved Rogero's fond embrace;
Which time will never from her mind efface.

XXV.

Because *she* could not go, one in her stead
To send to Vallombrosa she devised,
Who thither in the damsel's name should speed;
By whom should young Rogero be apprised
What kept her thence; and prayed, if prayer should need,
That there he for her love would be baptised;
And next, as was concerted, would intend
What might their bridal bring to happy end.

XXVI.

She purposed the same messenger should bear
As well to her Rogero his good steed;
Which he was ever wonted to hold dear,
Worthily dear; for sure so stout at need
And beauteous was no courser, far or near,
In land of Christian or of Paynim creed,
In occupation of the Gaul or Moor;
Except Bayardo good and Brigliador.

* Bradamant's mother.

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XXVII.

Valiant Rogero, when too bold of sprite
He backed the hippogryph and soared in air,
Frontino left (Frontino he was hight),
Whom Bradamant then took into her care,
And to Mount Alban sent; and had him dight,
And nourished, at large cost, with plenteous fare;
Nor let be rode except at easy pace.
Hence was he ne'er so sleek or well in case.

XXVIII.

Each damsel and each dame who her obeyed,
She tasked, together with herself, to sew,
With subtle toil; and with fine gold o'erlaid
A piece of silk of white and sable hue:
With this she trapt the horse: then chose a maid,
Old Callitrephia's daughter, from the crew;
Whose mother whilom Bradamant had nursed;
A damsel she in all her secrets versed.

XXIX.

How graven in her heart Rogero lies,
A thousand times to her she had confessed:
And had extolled above the deities
The manners, worth, and beauty he possessed.
"No better messenger could I devise,"
(She said, and called the damsel from the rest,)
"Nor have I one, Hippalca mine, more sage
"And sure than thee, to do my embassage."

XXX.

Hippalca was the attendant damsel hight.
"Go," (says her lady, and describes the way)
And afterwards informs the maid aright
Of all which to Rogero she should say;
And 'why she at the abbey failed the knight,
'Who must not to bad faith ascribe her stay,
'But this to Fortune charge, that so decides,
'Who, more than we ourselves, our conduct guides.'

XXXI.

She made the damsel mount upon a pad,
And put into her hand Frontino's rein;
And, if she met with one so rude or mad,
Who to deprive her of the steed were fain,
'Her to proclaim who was his owner,' bade,
'As that which might suffice to make him sane.'
For she believed there was no cavalier,
But that Rogero's name would make him fear.

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XXXII.

Of many and many things, whereof to treat
With good Rogero, in her stead, she showed;
Of which instructed well, her palfrey fleet
Hippalca stirred, nor longer there abode.
Through highway, field, and wood, a gloomy beat,
More than ten weary miles the damsel rode,
Ere any crossed her path on mischief bent,
Or even questioned whitherward she went.

XXXIII.

At noon of day, descending from a mount,
She in a streight and ill declivity,
Led by a dwarf, encountered Rodomont,
Who was afoot, and harnessed cap-a-pee.
The Moor towards her raised his haughty front,
And straight blasphemed the eternal Hierarchy,
That horse, so richly trapped and passing fair,
He had not found in a knight-errant's care.

XXXIV.

On the first courser he should find, the knight
Had sworn a solemn oath his hands to lay:
This *was* the first, nor he on steed could light
Fairer or fitter: yet to take away
The charger from a maid were foul despite.
Doubtful he stands, but covets sore the prey;
Eyes and surveys him, and says often, "Why
"Is not as well the courser's master by?"

XXXV.

"Ah! would he were!" to him the maid replied,
"For haply he would make thee change thy thought.
"A better knight than thee the horse doth ride,
"And vainly would his match on earth be sought."
—"Who tramples thus on other's fame?" he cried;
And she—"Rogero"—said, as she was taught.
Then Rodomont—"The steed I make my own;
"Since him a champion rides of such renown.

XXXVI.

"If he, as you relate, be of such force,
"That he surpasses all beside in might,
"I needs must pay the hire as well as horse;
"And be this at the pleasure of the knight!
"That I am Rodomont, to him discourse;
"And, if indeed with me he lists to fight,
"Me shall he find; in that I shine confest,
"By my own light, in motion or at rest.

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XXXVII.

"I leave such vestige wheresoe'er I tread,
"The volleyed thunder leaves not worse below."
He had thrown back, over Frontino's head,
The courser's gilded reins, in saying so,
Backed him, and left Hippalca sore bested;
Who, bathed in tears, and goaded by her woe,
Cries shame on him, and threats the king with ill:
Rodomont hearkens not, and climbs the hill:

XXXVIII.

Whither the dwarf conducts him on the trace
Of Doralice and Mandricardo bold.
Behind, Hippalca him in ceaseless chase,
Pursues with taunt and curses manifold.
What came of this is said in other place.
Turpin, by whom this history is told,
Here makes digression, and returns again
Thither, where faithless Pinnabel was slain.

XXXIX.

Duke Aymon's daughter scarce had turned away
From thence, who on her track in haste had gone,
Ere thither by another path, astray,
Zerbino came, with that deceitful crone,
And saw the bleeding body where it lay:
And, though the warrior was to him unknown,
As good and courteous, felt his bosom swell,
With pity at that cruel sight and fell.

XL.

Dead lay Sir Pinnabel, and bathed in gore;
From whom such streams of blood profusely flow,
As were a cause for wonderment, had more
Swords than a hundred joined to lay him low.
A print of recent footsteps to explore
The cavalier of Scotland was not slow;
Who took the adventure, in the hope to read
Who was the doer of the murderous deed.

XLI.

The hag to wait was ordered by the peer,
Who would return to her in little space.
She to the body of the count drew near,
And with fixt eye examined every place;
Who willed not aught, that in her sight was dear,
The body of the dead should vainly grace;
As one who, soiled with every other vice,
Surpassed all womankind in avarice.

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XLII.

If she in any manner could have thought,
Or hoped to have concealed the intended theft,
The bleeding warrior's surcoat, richly wrought,
She would, together with his arms, have reft;
But at what might be safely hidden, caught,
And, grieved at heart, forewent the glorious weft.
Him of a beauteous girdle she undrest,
And this secured between a double vest.

XLIII.

Zerbino after some short space came back,
Who vainly Bradamant had thence pursued
Through the green holt; because the beaten track
Was lost in many others in the wood;
And he (for daylight now began to lack)
Feared night should catch him 'mid those mountains rude,
And with the impious woman thence, in quest
Of inn, from the disastrous valley prest.

XLIV.

A spacious town, which Altaripa hight,
Journeying the twain, at two miles' distance spy:
There stopt the pair, and halted for the night,
Which, at full soar, even now went up the sky:
Nor long had rested there ere, left and right,
They from the people heard a mournful cry;
And saw fast tears from every eyelid fall,
As if some cause of sorrow touched them all.

XLV.

Zerbino asked the occasion, and 'twas said,
'Tidings had been to Count Anselmo brought,
'That Pinnabel, his son, was lying dead
'In a streight way between two mountains wrought.'
Zerbino feigned surprise, and hung his head,
In fear lest he the assassin should be thought;
But well divined this was the wight he found
Upon his journey, lifeless on the ground.

XLVI.

After some little time, the funeral bier
Arrives, 'mid torch and flambeau, where the cries
Are yet more thick, and to the starry sphere
Lament and noise of smitten hands arise;
And faster and from fuller vein the tear
Waters all cheeks, descending from the eyes;
But in a cloud more dismal than the rest,
Is the unhappy father's visage drest.

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XLVII.

While solemn preparation so was made
For the grand obsequies, with reverence due,
According to old use and honours paid,
In former age, corrupted by each new;
A proclamation of their lord allayed
Quickly the noise of the lamenting crew;
Promising any one a mighty gain
That should denounce by whom his son was slain.

XLVIII.

From voice to voice, from one to other ear,
The loud proclaim they through the town declare;
Till this the wicked woman chanced to hear,
Who past in rage the tiger or the bear;
And hence the ruin of the Scottish peer,
Either in hatred, would the crone prepare,
Or were it she alone might boast to be,
In human form, without humanity;

XLIX.

Or were it but to gain the promised prize;—
She to seek out the grieving county flew,
And, prefacing her tale in likely wise,
Said that Zerbino did the deed; and drew
The girdle forth, to witness to her lies;
Which straight the miserable father knew;
And on the woman's tale and token built
A clear assurance of Zerbino's guilt.

L.

And, weeping, with raised hands was heard to say,
'He for his murdered son would have amends.'
To block the hostel where Zerbino lay,
For all the town is risen, the father sends.
The prince, who deems his enemies away,
And no such injury as this attends,
In his first sleep is seized by Anselm's throng,
Who thinks he has endured so foul a wrong.

LI.

That night in prison, fettered with a pair
Of heavy fetters, is Zerbino chained.
For before yet the skies illumined are,
The wrongful execution is ordained;
And in the place will he be quartered, where
The deed was done for which he is arraigned.
No other inquest is on this received;
It is enough that so their lord believed.

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LII.

When, the next morn. Aurora stains with dye
Red, white, and yellow, the clear horizon,
The people rise, to punish (" Death !" their cry)
Zerbino for the crime he has not done :
They without order him accompany,
A lawless multitude, some ride, some run.
I' the midst the Scottish prince, with drooping head,
Is, bound upon a little hackney, led.

LIII.

But HE who with the innocent oft sides,
Nor those abandons who make him their stay,
For prince Zerbino such defence provides,
There is no fear that he will die to-day ;
God thitherward renowned Orlando guides ;
Whose coming for his safety paves the way :
Orlando sees beneath him on a plain
The youth to death conducted by the train.

LIV.

With him was wending she, that in the cell,
Prisoned, Orlando found ; that royal maid,
Child of Gallicia's king, fair Isabel,
Whom chance into the ruffians' power conveyed,
What time her ship she quitted, by the swell
Of the wild sea and tempest overlaid :
The damsel, who, yet nearer her heart-core
Than her own vital being, Zerbino wore.

LV.

She had beneath Orlando's convoy strayed,
Since rescued from the cave. When on the plain
The damsel saw the motley troop arrayed,
She asked Orlando what might be the train ?
" I know not," said the Count ; and left the maid
Upon the height, and hurried towards the plain.
He marked Zerbino, and at the first sight
A baron of high worth esteemed the knight,

LVI.

And asked him, ' why and wherefore him they led
' Thus captive,' to Zerbino drawing near :
At this the doleful prince upraised his head,
And, having better heard the cavalier,
Rehearsed the truth ; and this so well he said,
That he deserved the succour of the peer.
Well Sir Orlando him, by his reply,
Deemed innocent, and wrongly doomed to die.

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LVII.

And, after he had heard 'twas at the hest
Of Anselm, Count of Altaripa, done,
Was certain 'twas an outrage manifest,
Since nought but ill could spring from him; and one,
Moreover, was the other's foe profest,
From ancient hate and enmity, which run
In Clermont and Maganza's blood; a feud
With injuries, and death and shame pursued.

LVIII.

Orlando to the rabble cried, "Untie
"The cavalier, unless you would be slain."
—"Who deals such mighty blows?"—one made reply,
That would be thought the truest of the train;
"Were he of fire who makes such bold defy,
"We wax or straw, too haughty were the strain:"
And charged with that the paladin of France.
Orlando at the losel couched his lance.

LIX.

The shining armour which the chief had rent
From young Zerbino but the night before,
And clothed himself withal, poor succour lent
Against Orlando in that combat sore.
Against the churl's right cheek the weapon went:
It failed indeed his tempered helm to bore,
But such a shock he suffered in the strife,
As broke his neck, and stretched him void of life.

LX.

All at one course, of other of the band,
With lance unmoved, he pierced the bosom through;
Left it; on Durindana laid his hand,
And broke into the thickest of the crew:
One head in twain he severed with the brand,
(While, from the shoulders lopt, another flew)
Of many pierced the throat; and in a breath
Above a hundred broke and put to death.

LXI.

Above a third he killed, and chased the rest,
And smote, and pierced, and cleft, as he pursued.
Himself of helm or shield one dispossest;
One with spontoon or bill the champaign strewed.
This one along the road, across it prest
A fourth; this squats in cavern or in wood.
Orlando, without pity, on that day
Lets none escape whom he has power to slay.

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LXII.

Of a hundred men and twenty, in that crew,
(So Turpin sums them) eighty died at least.
Thither Orlando finally withdrew,
Where, with a heart sore trembling in his breast,
Zerbino sat; how he at Roland's view
Rejoiced, in verse can hardly be exprest:
Who, but that he was on the hackney bound,
Would at his feet have cast himself to ground.

LXIII.

While Roland, after he had loosed the knight,
Helped him to don his shining arms again;
Stript from those serjeants' captain,[5] who had dight
Himself with the good harness, to his pain;
The prince on Isabella turned his sight,
Who had halted on the hill above the plain:
And, after she perceived the strife was o'er,
Nearer the field of fight her beauties bore.

LXIV.

When young Zerbino at his side surveyed
The lady, who by him was held so dear;
The beauteous lady, whom false tongue had said
Was drowned, so often wept with many a tear,
As if ice at his heart-core had been laid,
Waxed cold, and some deal shook the cavalier;
But the chill quickly past, and he, instead,
Was flushed with amorous fire, from foot to head.

LXV.

From quickly clipping her in his embrace,
Him reverence for Anglantes' sovereign stayed;
Because he thought, and held for certain case,
That Roland was a lover of the maid;
So past from pain to pain; and little space
Endured the joy which he at first assayed.
And worse he bore she should another's be,
Than hearing that the maid was drowned at sea.

LXVI.

And worse he grieved, that she was with a knight,
To whom he owed so much: because to wrest
The lady from his hands, was neither right,
Nor yet perhaps would prove an easy quest.
He, without quarrel, had no other wight
Suffered to part, of such a prize possest;
But would endure, Orlando (such his debt)
A foot upon his prostrate neck should set.

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LXVII.

The three in silence journey to a font,
Where they alight, and halt beside the well;
His helmet here undid the weary Count,
And made the prince too quit the iron shell.
The youth unhelmed, she sees her lover's front,
And pale with sudden joy grows Isabel:
Then, changing, brightened like a humid flower,
When the warm sun succeeds to drenching shower.

LXVIII.

And without more delay or scruple, prest
To cast her arms about her lover dear;
And not a word could draw forth from her breast,
But bathed his neck and face with briny tear.
Orlando, who remarked the love exprest,
Needing no more to make the matter clear,
Could not but, by these certain tokens, see
This could no other but Zerbino be.

LXIX.

When speech returned, ere yet the maiden well
Had dried her cheeks from the descending tear,
She only of the courtesy could tell
Late shown her by Anglantes' cavalier.
The prince, who in one scale weighed Isabel,
Together with his life, esteemed as dear,—
Fell at Orlando's feet and him adored,
As to two lives at once by him restored.

LXX.

Proffers and thanks had followed, with a round
Of courtesies between the warlike pair,
Had they not heard the covered paths resound,
Which overgrown with gloomy foliage were.
Upon their heads the helmet, late unbound,
They quickly place, and to their steeds repair;
And, lo! a knight and maid arrive, ere well
The cavaliers are seated in the sell.

LXXI.

This was the Tartar Mandricardo, who
In haste behind the paladin had sped,
To venge Alzirdo and Manilard, the two
Whom good Orlando's valour had laid dead:
Though afterwards less eager to pursue,
Since he with him fair Doralice had led;
Whom from a hundred men, in plate and chain,
He, with a simple staff of oak, had ta'en.

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LXXII.

Yet knew not that it was Anglantes' peer
This while, of whom he had pursued the beat;
Though that he was a puissant cavalier
By certain signals was he taught to weet.
More than Zerbino him he eyed, and, near,
Perused the paladin from head to feet;
Then finding all the tokens coincide,
"Thou art the man I seek," the paynim cried.

LXXIII.

"'Tis now ten days," to him the Tartar said,
"That thee I still have followed; so the fame
"Had stung me, and in me such longing bred,
"Which of thee to our camp of Paris came:
"When, amid thousands by thy hand laid dead,
"Scarce one alive fled thither, to proclaim
"The mighty havoc made by thy good hand,
"'Mid Tremisena's and Noritia's band.

LXXIV.

"I was not, as I knew, in following slow
"Both to behold thee, and to prove thy might;
"And by the surcoat o'er thine arms I know,
"(Instructed of thy vest) thou art the knight:
"And if such cognizance thou didst not show,
"And, 'mid a hundred, wert concealed from sight,
"For what thou art thou plainly wouldst appear,
"Thy worth conspicuous in thy haughty cheer."

LXXV.

"No one can say," to him Orlando cried,
"But that a valiant cavalier thou art:
"For such a brave desire can ill reside,
"'Tis my assurance, in a humble heart.
"Since thou wouldst see me, would that thou *inside*,
"Couldst as *without*, behold me! I apart
"Will lay my helm, that in all points thy will
"And purpose of thy quest I may fulfil.

LXXVI.

"But when thou well hast scanned me with thine eye,
"To that thine other wish as well attend:
"It yet remains for thee to satisfy
"The want, which leads thee after me to wend;
"That thou mayest mark if, in my valour, I
"Agree with that bold cheer thou so commend."
—"And now," (exclaimed the Tartar), "for the rest!
"For my first want is thoroughly redrest."

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LXXVII.

Orlando, all this while, from head to feet,
Searches the paynim with inquiring eyes:
Both sides, and next the pommel of his seat
Surveys, yet neither mace nor tuck espies;
And asks, 'how he the combat will repeat,
'If his good lance at the encounter flies.'
—"Take thou no care for that," replied the peer;
"Thus into many have I stricken fear.

LXXVIII.

"I have an oath in Heaven to gird no blade,
"Till Durindana from the count be won.
"Pursuing whom, I through each road here strayed,
"With him to reckon for more posts than one.
"If thou wilt please to hear, my oath I made
"When on my head I placed this morion:
"Which casque, with all the other arms I bear,
"A thousand years ago great Hector's were.

LXXIX.

"To these good arms nought lacks beside the sword;
"How it was stolen, to you I cannot say:
"This now, it seems, is borne by Brava's lord,
"And hence is he so daring in affray.
"Yet well I trust, if I the warrior board,
"To make him render his ill-gotten prey.
"Yet more; I seek the champion with desire
"To avenge the famous Agrican, my sire.

LXXX.

"Him this Orlando slew by treachery,"
"I wot, nor could have slain in other wise."
The count could bear no more, and. "'Tis a lie!"
(Exclaims,) "and whosoever says so, lies:
"Him fairly did I slay; Orlando, I.
"But what thou seekest Fortune here supplies;
"And *this* the faulchion is, which thou hast sought,
"Which shall be thine if by thy valour bought.

LXXXI.

"Although mine is the faulchion, rightfully,
"Let us for it in courtesy contend;
"Nor will I in this battle, that it be
"More mine than thine, but to a tree suspend:
"Bear off the weapon freely hence, if me
"Thou kill or conquer." As he made an end,
He Durindana from his belt unslung,
And in mid-field upon a sapling hung.

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LXXXII.

Already distant half the range of bow
Is from his opposite each puissant knight,
And pricks against the other, nothing slow
To slack the reins or ply the rowels bright.
Already dealt is either mighty blow,
Where the helm yields a passage to the sight.
As if of ice, the shattered lances fly,
Broke in a thousand pieces, to the sky.

LXXXIII.

One and the other lance parforce must split,
In that the cavaliers refuse to bend;
The cavaliers, who in the saddle sit,
Returning with the staff's unbroken end.
The warriors, who with steel had ever smit,
Now, as a pair of hinds in rage contend
For the mead's boundary or river's right,
Armed with two clubs, maintain a cruel fight.[3]

LXXXIV.

The truncheons which the valiant champions bear,
Fail in the combat, and few blows resist;
Both rage with mightier fury, here and there,
Left without other weapon than the fist;
With this the desperate foes engage, and, where
The hand can grapple, plate and mail untwist.
Let none desire, to guard himself from wrongs,
A heavier hammer or more holding tongs.

LXXXV.

How can the Saracen conclude the fray
With honour, which he haughtily had sought?
'Twere folly to waste time in an assay
Where to himself more harm the smiter wrought
Than to the smitten: in conclusion, they
Closed, and the paynim king Orlando caught,
And strained against his bosom; what Jove's son
Did by Antæus, thinking to have done.

LXXXVI.

Him griped athwart, he, in impetuous mood,
Would now push from him, now would closely strain;
And waxed so wroth that, in his heat of blood,
The Tartar little thought about his rein.
Firm in his stirrups self-collected stood
Roland, and watched his vantage to obtain;
He to the other courser's forehead slipt
His wary hand, and thence the bridle stript.

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LXXXVII.

The Saracen assays with all his might
To choke, and from the sell his foeman tear.
With either knee Orlando grasps it tight,
Nor can the Tartar move him, here or there.
But with the straining of the paynim knight,
The girts which hold his saddle broken are.
Scarce conscious of his fall, Orlando lies,
With feet i' the stirrups, tightening yet his thighs.

LXXXVIII.

As falls a sack of armour, with such sound
Tumbled Orlando, when he prest the plain.
King Mandricardo's courser, when he found
His head delivered from the guiding rein,
Made off with him, unheeding what the ground,
Stumbling through woodland, or by pathway plain,
Hither and thither, blinded by his fear;
And bore with him the Tartar cavalier.

LXXXIX.

The beauteous Doralice, who sees her guide
So quit the field,—dismayed at his retreat,
And wonted in his succour to confide,
Her hackney drives behind his courser fleet:
The paynim rates the charger, in his pride,
And smites him oftentimes with hands and feet;
Threatening, as if he understood his lore;
And where he'd stop the courser, chafes him more.

XC.

Not looking to his feet, by high or low,
The beast of craven kind, with headlong force
Three miles in rings had gone, and more would go,
But that into a fosse which stopt their course,
Not lined with featherbed or quilt below,
Tumble, reversed, the rider and his horse.
On the hard ground was Mandricardo thrown,
Yet neither spoiled himself, nor broke a bone:

XCI.

Here stopt the horse; but him he could not guide,
Left without bit his motions to restrain.
Brimfull of rage and choler, at his side,
The Tartar held him, grappled by the mane.
"Put upon him" (to Mandricardo cried
His lady, Doralice) "my hackney's rein,
"Since for the bridle I have little use;
"For gentle is my palfrey, reined or loose."

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XCII.

The paynim deems it were discourtesy
To accept the proffer by the damsel made.
But *his* through other means a rein will be;
Since Fortune, who his wishes well appaid,
Made thitherward the false Gabrina flee,
After she young Zerbino had betrayed:
Who like a she-wolf fled, which, as she hies,
At distance hears the hounds and hunters' cries.

XCIII.

She had upon her back the gallant gear,
And the same youthful ornaments and vest,
Stript from the ill-taught damsel for her jeer,
That in her spoils the beldam might be drest,
And rode the horse that damsel backed whilere;
Who was among the choicest and the best.
Ere yet aware of her, the ancient dame
On Doralice and Mandricardo came.

XCIV.

Stordilane's daughter and the Tartar king
Laugh at the vest of youthful show and shape,
Upon that ancient woman, figuring
Like monkey, rather say, like grandam ape.
From her the Saracen designs to wring
The rein, and does the deed: upon the rape
Of the crone's bridle, he, with angry cry,
Threatens and scares her horse, and makes him fly.

XCV.

He flies and hurries through the forest gray
That ancient woman, almost dead with fear,
By hill and dale, by straight and crooked way,
By fosse and cliff, at hazard, there and here.
But it imports me not so much to say
Of her, that I should leave Anglantes' peer;
Who, from annoyance of a foe released,
The broken saddle at his ease re-pieced.

XCVI.

He mounts his horse, and watches long, before
Departing, if the foe will re-appear;
Nor seeing puissant Mandricardo more,
At last resolves in search of him to steer.
But, as one nurtured well in courtly lore,
From thence departed not the cavalier,
Till he with kind salutes, in friendly strain,
Fair leave had taken of the loving twain.

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XCVII.

At his departure waxed Zerbino woe,
And Isabella wept for sorrow: they
Had wended with him, but the count, although
Their company was fair and good, said nay;
Urging for reason, 'Nought so ill could show
'In cavalier, as, when upon his way
'To seek his foeman out, to take a friend,
'Who him with arms might succour or defend.'

XCVIII.

Next, if they met the Saracen, before
They should encounter him, besought them say,
'That he, Orlando, would for three days more,
'Waiting him, in that territory stay:
'But, after that, would seek the flags which bore
'The golden lilies, and King Charles' array.
'That Mandricardo through their means might know,
'If such his pleasure, where to find his foe.'

XCIX.

The lovers promised willingly to do
This, and whatever else he should command.
By different ways the cavaliers withdrew,
One on the right, and one on the left hand.
The count, ere other path he would pursue,
Took from the sapling, and replaced, his brand.
And, where he weened he might the paynim best
Encounter, thitherward his steed addrest.

C.

The course in pathless woods, which, without rein,
The Tartar's charger had pursued astray,
Made Roland for two days, with fruitless pain,
Follow him, without tidings of his way.
Orlando reached a rill of crystal vein,
On either bank of which a meadow lay;
Which, stained with native hues and rich, he sees,
And dotted o'er with fair and many trees.

CI.

The mid-day fervour made the shelter sweet
To hardy herd as well as naked swain;
So that Orlando, well beneath the heat
Some deal might wince, oppress with plate and chain.
He entered, for repose, the cool retreat,
And found it the abode of grief and pain;
And place of sojourn more accursed and fell,
On that unhappy day, than tongue can tell.

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CII.

Turning him round, he there, on many a tree,
Beheld engraved, upon the woody shore,
What as the writing of his deity
He knew, as soon as he had marked the lore.
This was a place of those described by me,
Whither ofttimes, attended by Medore,
From the near shepherd's cot had wont to stray
The beauteous lady, sovereign of Catay.

CIII.

In a hundred knots, amid those green abodes,
In a hundred parts, their cyphered names are dight;
Whose many letters are so many goads,
Which Love has in his bleeding heart-core pight.
He would discredit in a thousand modes,
That which he credits in his own despite;
And would parforce persuade himself, *that* rhind
Other Angelica than his had signed.

CIV.

"And yet I know these characters," he cried,
"Of which I have so many read and seen;
"By her may this Medoro be belied,
"And me, she, figured in the name, may mean."
Feeding on such like phantasies, beside
The real truth, did sad Orlando lean
Upon the empty hope, though ill contented,
Which he by self-illusions had fomented.

CV.

But stirred and aye rekindled it, the more
That he to quench the ill suspicion wrought,
Like the incautious bird, by fowler's lore,
Hampered in net or lime; which, in the thought
To free its tangled pinions and to soar,
By struggling, is but more securely caught.
Orlando passes thither, where a mountain
O'erhangs in guise of arch the crystal fountain.

CVI.

Splay-footed ivy, with its mantling spray,
And gadding vine, the cavern's entry case:
Where often in the hottest noon of day
The pair had rested, locked in fond embrace.
Within the grotto, and without it, they
Had oftener than in any other place
With charcoal or with chalk their names pourtrayed,
Or flourished with the knife's indenting blade.

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CVII.

Here from his horse the sorrowing County lit,
And at the entrance of the grot surveyed
A cloud of words, which seemed but newly writ,
And which the young Medoro's hand had made.
On the great pleasure he had known in it,
This sentence he in verses had arrayed;
Which in his tongue, I deem, might make pretence
To polished phrase; and such in ours the sense.

CVIII.

"Gay plants, green herbage, rill of limpid vein,
"And, grateful with cool shade, thou gloomy cave,
"Where oft, by many wooed with fruitless pain,
"Beauteous Angelica, the child of grave
"King Galaphron, within my arms has lain;
"For the convenient harbourage you gave,
"I, poor Medoro, can but in my lays,
"As recompence, for ever sing your praise.

CIX.

"And any loving lord devoutly pray,
"Damsel and cavalier, and every one,
"Whom choice or fortune hither shall convey,
"Stranger or native,—to this crystal run,
"Shade, caverned rock, and grass, and plants, to say,
"*Benignant be to you the fostering sun*
"*And moon, and may the choir of nymphs provide,*
"*That never swain his flock may hither guide!*"

CX.

In Arabic was writ the blessing said,
Known to Orlando like the Latin tongue,
Who, versed in many languages, best read
Was in this speech; which oftentimes from wrong,
And injury, and shame, had saved his head,
What time he roved the Saracens among.
But let him boast not of its former boot,
O'erbalanced by the present bitter fruit.

CXI.

Three times, and four, and six, the lines imprest
Upon the stone that wretch perused, in vain
Seeking another sense than was exprest,
And ever saw the thing more clear and plain;
And all the while, within his troubled breast,
He felt an icy hand his heart-core strain.
With mind and eyes close fastened on the block,
At length he stood, not differing from the rock.

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CXII.

Then well-nigh lost all feeling; so a prey
Wholly was he to that o'ermastering woe.
This is a pang, believe the experienced say
Of him who speaks, which does all griefs outgo.
His pride had from his forehead passed away,
His chin had fallen upon his breast below;
Nor found he, so grief barred each natural vent,
Moisture for tears, or utterance for lament.

CXIII.

Stifled within, the impetuous sorrow stays,
Which would too quickly issue; so to abide
Water is seen, imprisoned in the vase,
Whose neck is narrow and whose swell is wide;
What time, when one turns up the inverted base,
Towards the mouth, so hastes the hurrying tide,
And in the streight encounters such a stop,
It scarcely works a passage, drop by drop.

CXIV.

He somewhat to himself returned, and thought
How possibly the thing might be untrue:
That some one (so he hoped, desired, and sought
To think) his lady would with shame pursue;
Or with such weight of jealousy had wrought
To whelm *his* reason, as should him undo;
And that he, whosoe'er the thing had planned,
Had counterfeited passing well her hand.

CXV.

With such vain hope he sought himself to cheat,
And manned some deal his spirits and awoke;
Then prest the faithful Brigliadoro's seat,
As on the sun's retreat his sister broke.
Nor far the warrior had pursued his beat,
Ere eddying from a roof he saw the smoke;
Heard noise of dog and kine, a farm espied,
And thitherward in quest of lodging hied.

CXVI.

Languid, he lit, and left his Brigliador
To a discreet attendant: one undrest
His limbs, one doffed the golden spurs he wore,
And one bore off, to clean, his iron vest.
This was the homestead where the young Medore
Lay wounded, and was here supremely blest.
Orlando here, with other food unfed,
Having supt full of sorrow, sought his bed.

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CXVII.

The more the wretched sufferer seeks for ease,
He finds but so much more distress and pain;
Who every where the loathed hand-writing sees,
On wall, and door, and window: he would fain
Question his host of this, but holds his peace,
Because, in sooth, he dreads too clear, too plain
To make the thing, and this would rather shroud,
That it may less offend him, with a cloud.

CXVIII.

Little availed the count his self-deceit;
For there was one who spake of it unsought;
The shepherd-swain, who to allay the heat,
With which he saw his guest so troubled, thought:
The tale which he was wonted to repeat
—Of the two lovers—to each listener taught,
A history which many loved to hear,
He now, without reserve, 'gan tell the peer.

CXIX.

'How at Angelica's persuasive prayer,
'He to his farm had carried young Medore,
'Grievously wounded with an arrow; where,
'In little space she healed the angry sore.
'But while she exercised this pious care,
'Love in her heart the lady wounded more,
'And kindled from small spark so fierce a fire,
'She burnt all over, restless with desire:

CXX.

'Nor thinking she of mightiest king was born,
'Who ruled in the east, nor of her heritage,
'Forced by too puissant love, had thought no scorn
'To be the consort of a poor foot-page.'
—His story done, to them in proof was borne
The gem, which, in reward for harbourage,
To her extended in that kind abode,
Angelica, at parting, had bestowed.

CXXI.

A deadly axe was this unhappy close,
Which, at a single stroke, lopt off the head;
When, satiate with innumerable blows,
That cruel hangman Love his hate had fed.
Orlando studied to conceal his woes;
And yet the mischief gathered force and spread,
And would break out parforce in tears and sighs,
Would he, or would he not, from mouth and eyes.

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CXXII.

When he can give the rein to raging woe,
Alone, by other's presence unreprest,
From his full eyes the tears descending flow,
In a wide stream, and flood his troubled breast.
'Mid sob and groan, he tosses to and fro
About his weary bed, in search of rest;
And vainly shifting, harder than a rock
And sharper than a nettle found its flock.

CXXIII.

Amid the pressure of such cruel pain,
It past into the wretched sufferer's head,
That oft the ungrateful lady must have lain,
Together with her leman, on that bed:
Nor less he loathed the couch in his disdain,
Nor from the down upstarted with less dread,
Than churl, who, when about to close his eyes,
Springs from the turf, if he a serpent spies.

CXXIV.

In him, forthwith, such deadly hatred breed
That bed, that house, that swain, he will not stay
Till the morn break, or till the dawn succeed,
Whose twilight goes before approaching day.
In haste, Orlando takes his arms and steed,
And to the deepest greenwood wends his way.
And, when assured that he is there alone,
Gives utterance to his grief in shriek and groan.

CXXV.

Never from tears, never from sorrowing,
He paused; nor found he peace by night or day:
He fled from town, in forest harbouring,
And in the open air on hard earth lay.
He marvelled at himself, how such a spring
Of water from his eyes could stream away,
And breath was for so many sobs supplied;
And thus ofttimes, amid his mourning, cried:

CXXVI.

"These are no longer real tears which rise,
"And which I scatter from so full a vein.[4]
"Of tears my ceaseless sorrow lacked supplies;
"They stopt when to mid-height scarce rose my pain.
"The vital moisture rushing to my eyes,
"Driven by the fire within me, now would gain
"A vent; and it is this which I expend,
"And which my sorrows and my life will end.

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CXXVII.

"No; these, which are the index of my woes,
"These are not sighs, nor sighs are such; they fail
"At times, and have their season of repose:
"I feel, my breast can never less exhale
"Its sorrow: Love, who with his pinions blows
"The fire about my heart, creates this gale.
"Love, by what miracle dost thou contrive,
"It wastes not in the fire thou keep'st alive?

CXXVIII.

"I am not—am not what I seem to sight:
"What Roland was is dead and under ground,
"Slain by that most ungrateful lady's spite,
"Whose faithlessness inflicted such a wound.
"Divided from the flesh, I am his sprite,
"Which in this hell, tormented, walks its round,
"To be, but in its shadow left above,
"A warning to all such as trust in love."

CXXIX.

All night about the forest roved the count,
And, at the break of daily light, was brought
By his unhappy fortune to the fount,
Where his inscription young Medoro wrought.
To see his wrongs inscribed upon that mount,
Inflamed his fury so, in him was nought
But turned to hatred, frenzy, rage, and spite;
Nor paused he more, but bared his faulchion bright;

CXXX.

Cleft through the writing; and the solid block,
Into the sky, in tiny fragments sped.
Wo worth each sapling and that caverned rock,
Where Medore and Angelica were read!
So scathed, that they to shepherd or to flock
Thenceforth shall never furnish shade or bed.
And that sweet fountain, late so clear and pure,
From such tempestuous wrath was ill secure.

CXXXI.

For he turf, stone, and trunk, and shoot, and lop
Cast without cease into the beauteous source;
Till, turbid from the bottom to the top,
Never again was clear the troubled course.
At length, for lack of breath, compelled to stop,
(When he is bathed in sweat, and wasted force,
Serves not his fury more) he falls, and lies
Upon the mead, and, gazing upward, sighs.

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CXXXII.

Wearied and woe-begone, he fell to ground,
And turned his eyes toward heaven; nor spake he aught,
Nor ate, nor slept, till in his daily round
The golden sun had broken thrice, and sought
His rest anew; nor ever ceased his wound
To rankle, till it marred his sober thought.
At length, impelled by frenzy, the fourth day,
He from his limbs tore plate and mail away.

CXXXIII.

Here was his helmet, there his shield bestowed;
His arms far off, and, farther than the rest,
His cuirass; through the greenwood wide was strowed
All his good gear, in fine; and next his vest
He rent; and, in his fury, naked showed
His shaggy paunch, and all his back and breast.
And 'gan that frenzy act, so passing dread,
Of stranger folly never shall be said.

CXXXIV.

So fierce his rage, so fierce his fury grew,
That all obscured remained the warrior's sprite;
Nor, for forgetfulness, his sword he drew,
Or wonderous deeds, I trow, had wrought the knight:
But neither this, nor bill, nor axe to hew,
Was needed by Orlando's peerless might.
He of his prowess gave high proofs and full,
Who a tall pine uprooted at a pull.

CXXXV.

He many others, with as little let
As fennel, wall-wort-stem, or dill, up-tore;
And ilex, knotted oak, and fir upset,
And beech, and mountain ash, and elm-tree hoar.
He did what fowler, ere he spreads his net,
Does, to prepare the champaigne for his lore,
By stubble, rush, and nettle-stalk; and broke,
Like these, old sturdy trees and stems of oak.

CXXXVI.

The shepherd swains, who hear the tumult nigh,
Leaving their flocks beneath the greenwood tree,
Some here, some there, across the forest hie,
And hurry thither, all, the cause to see.
—But I have reached such point, my history,
If I o'erpass this bound, may irksome be;
And I my story will delay to end.
Rather than by my tediousness offend.

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CANTO XXIV.

ARGUMENT.

Odorico's and Gabrina's guilt repaid,
Youthful Zerbino sets at large the train;
He in defence of good Orlando's blade,
Is afterwards by Mandricardo slain.
Isabel weeps; by Rodomont is made
War on the Tartar king, and truce again,
To succour Agramant and his array;
Who to the lilies are well-nigh a prey.

I.

Let him make haste his feet to disengage,
Nor lime his wings, whom Love has made a prize;
For love, in fine, is nought but frenzied rage,
By universal suffrage of the wise:
And albeit some may show themselves more sage
Than Roland, they but sin in other guise.
For, what proves folly more than on this shelf,
Thus, for another, to destroy oneself?

II.

Various are love's effects; but from one source
All issue, though they lead a different way.
He is, as 'twere, a forest, where parforce
Who enter its recesses go astray;
And here and there pursue their devious course:
In sum, to you I, for conclusion, say;
He who grows old in love, besides all pain
Which waits such passion, well deserves a chain.

III.

One here may well reproach me; "Brother, thou
"Seest not thy faults, while thou dost others fit."
—I answer, that, "I see mine plain enow,
"In this my lucid interval of wit;
"And strive and hope withal I shall forego
"This dance of folly; but yet cannot quit,
"As quickly as I would, the faults I own;
"For my disease has reached the very bone."

IV.

I in the other canto said before,
Orlando, furious and insensate wight,
Having torn off the arms and vest he wore,
And cast away from him his faulchion bright,
And up-torn trees, and made the forest hoar
And hollow cave resound, and rocky height,
Towards the noise some shepherds, on that side,
Their heavy sins or evil planets guide.

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V.

Viewing the madman's wonderous feats more near,
The frighted band of rustics turned and fled;
But they, in their disorder, knew not where,
As happens oftentimes in sudden dread.
The madman in a thought is in their rear,
Seizes a shepherd, and plucks off his head!
And this as easily as one might take
Apple from tree, or blossom from the brake.

VI.

He by one leg the heavy trunk in air
Upheaved, and made a mace the rest to bray.
Astounded, upon earth he stretched one pair,
Who haply may awake at the last day.
The rest, who well advised and nimble are,
At once desert the field and scour away:
Nor had the madman their pursuit deferred,
Had he not turned already on their herd.

VII.

By such examples warned, the rustic crew
Abandoned in the fields pick, scythe, and plough,
And to the roof of house and temple flew,
(For ill secure was elm or willow's bough,)
From hence the maniac's horrid rage they view;
Who, dealing kick, and bite, and scratch, and blow
Horses and oxen slew, his helpless prey;
And well the courser ran who 'scaped that day.

VIII.

Already might'st thou hear how loudly ring
The hubbub and the din, from neighbouring farms,
Outcry and horn, and rustic trumpeting;
And faster sound of bells; with various arms,
By thousands, with spontoon, bow, spit, and sling,
Lo! from the hills the rough militia swarms.
As many peasants from the vale below,
To make rude war upon the madman go.

IX.

As beats the wave upon the salt-sea shore,
Sportive at first, which southern wind has stirred,
When the next, bigger than what went before,
And bigger than the second, breaks the third;
And the vext water waxes evermore,
And louder on the beach the surf is heard:
The crowd, increasing so, the count assail,
And drop from mountain and ascend from dale.

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X.

Twice he ten peasants slaughtered in his mood,
Who, charging him in disarray, were slain;
And this experiment right clearly showed
To stand aloof was safest for the train.
Was none who from his body could draw blood;
For iron smote the impassive skin in vain.
So had heaven's King preserved the count from scathe,
To make him guardian of his holy faith.

XI.

He would have been in peril on that day,
Had he been made of vulnerable mould;
And might have learned what 'twas to cast away
His sword, and, weaponless, so play the bold.
The rustic troop retreated from the fray,
Seeing no stroke upon the madman told.
Since him no other enemy attends,
Orlando to a neighbouring township wends.

XII.

Since every one had left the place for dread,
No wight he found within it, small or great:
But here was homely food in plenty spread,
Victual, well sorting with the pastoral state.
Here, acorns undistinguishing from bread,[1]
By tedious fast and fury driven to sate
His hunger, he employed his hand and jaw
On what he first discovered, cooked or raw.

XIII.

Thence, repossest with the desire to rove,
He, through the land, did man and beast pursue;
And scouring, in his frenzy, wood and grove,
Took sometimes goat or doe of dappled hue:
Often with bear and with wild boar he strove,
And with his naked hand the brutes o'erthrew;
And gorging oftentimes the savage fare,
Swallowed the prey with all its skin and hair.

XIV.

Now right, now left, he wandered, far and wide,
Throughout all France, and reached a bridge one day;
Beneath which ran an ample water's tide,
Of steep and broken banks: a turret gray
Was builded by the spacious river's side,
Discerned, from far and near, and every way.
What here he did I shall relate elsewhere,
Who first must make the Scottish prince my care.

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XV.

When Roland had departed on his quest,
Zerbino paused some deal; then, in his rear,
Slowly his steed by the same path addrest,
Which had been taken by Anglantes' peer;
Nor two miles on his way, I think, had prest,
When he beheld a captive cavalier,
Upon a sorry, little, hackney tied,
And by armed horseman watched on either side.

XVI.

Zerbino speedily the prisoner knew,
And Isabel, as soon; when nigh surveyed.
This was Sir Odoric, the Biscayan, who,
Like wolf, the guardian of a lamb was made:
To whom, of all his friends esteemed most true,
Zerbino Isabella had conveyed;
Hoping, one hitherto by him found just,
Would now, as ever, have approved his trust.

XVII.

Even then how all had chanced, with punctual lore,
Was Isabel relating to the knight;
'How in the pinnace she was saved, before
'The broken vessel sank at sea outright:
'Odoric's assault; and next, how bandits bore
'Her to the cavern, in a mountain dight.'
Nor Isabella yet her tale has told,
When bound the malefactor they behold.

XVIII.

The two that had Sir Odoric in their ward,
The royal damsel Isabella knew;
And deemed he was her lover and her lord,
That pricked beside the lady, fair of hue.
More; that the bearings on his shield record
The honours of the stem from which he grew;
And found, as better they observed his cheer,
They had judged rightly of the cavalier.

XIX.

Lighting, with open arms and hurried pace,
They make towards Zerbino eagerly,
And, kneeling, with bare head, the prince embrace,
Where lord is clipt by one of less degree.
Zerbino, looking either in the face,
Knows one Corebo of Biscay to be,
And Sir Almonio, his co-mate; the pair
Charged, under Odoric, with the galley's care.

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XX.

Almonio cried, "Since God is pleased in the end,
"Grammercy! Isabel should be with you;
"My lord, I very clearly comprehend
"I should deliver tidings, nothing new,
"If I should now inform you why I wend
"With this offender, whom with me you view.
"Since she, who at his hands has suffered worst,
"The story of his crimes will have rehearsed.

XXI.

"How me that traitour duped thou hast not to learn,
"What time he rid himself of me, nor how
"Corebo, who would have avenged the scorn,
"Intended to the damsel, was laid low:
"But that which followed, upon my return,
"By her unseen or heard, she cannot know,
"So as to thee the story to have told;
"The sequel of it then will I unfold.

XXII.

"I seaward from the city, with a store
"Of nags, collected in a hurry, fare;
"Aye watchful, if the trace I can explore
"Of those left far behind me; I repair
"Thitherward; I arrive upon the shore,
"The place where they were left; look everywhere;
"Nor sign of them perceive upon that strand,
"Except some steps, new-printed on the sand.

XXIII.

"The steps I traced into the forest drear;
"Nor far within the greenwood had I wound,
"When, guided by a noise which smote my ear,
"I saw my comrade bleeding on the ground:
"Of Isabel I asked the cavalier,
"Of Odoric, and what hand had dealt his wound:
"And thence departed, when the thing I knew,
"Seeking the wretch these precipices through.

XXIV.

"Wide circling still I go, and through that day
"I find no other sign of him that fled;
"At length return to where Corebo lay,
"Who had the ground about him dyed so red,
"That he, had I made little more delay,
"A grave would have required, and, more than bed
"And succour of the leech, to make him sound,
"Craved priest and friar to lay him inthe ground

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XXV.

"I had him to the neighbouring city brought,
"And boarded with a friendly host; and there
"Corebo's cure in little time was wrought,
"Beneath an old chirurgeon's skilful care.
"This finished, having arms and horses bought,
"We thence together to the court repair
"Of King Alphonso of Biscay; where I
"Find out the traitor, and to fight defy.

XXVI.

"The monarch's justice, who fair field and free
"Allowed us for the duel, and my right,
"And Destiny to boot (for Destiny
"Oftener makes conquest where she listeth, light)
"So backed my arms, *that* felon was by me
"Worsted, and made a prisoner in the fight.
"Alphonso, having heard his guilt confessed,
"Bade me dispose of him as liked me best.

XXVII.

"Him would I neither loose, nor yet have slain,
"But, as thou seest, in bonds to thee convey:
"That whether he should be condemned to pain,
"Or death, it should be thine his doom to say.
"I, hearing thou wert with King Charlemagne,
"Thither, in hope to find thee, took my way.
"I thank my God, that thee upon this ground,
"Where I least hoped to meet thee, I have found.

XXVIII.

"As well I render thanks, that Isabel
"I see restored to thee, I know not how,
"Of whom, by reason of that traitor fell,
"I deemed thou never more should'st tidings know."
In silence prince Zerbino hears him tell
His story, gazing upon Odoric's brow,
In pity, more than hate, as he perpends
How foully such a goodly friendship ends.

XXIX.

After Almonio had his tale suspended,
Astounded for a while the prince stood by;
Wondering, that he who least should have offended,
Had him requited with such treachery:
But, his long fit of admiration ended,
Waking from his amazement with a sigh,
Questioned the prisoner in the horsemen's hold,
If that was true the cavalier had told.

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XXX.

The faithless man alighted, and down fell
Upon his bended knees,[2] and answered; "Sir,
"All people that on middle earth do dwell,
"Through weakness of their nature, sin and err.
"One thing alone distinguishes the well
"And evil doer; *this*, at every stir
"Of least desire, submits, without a blow;
"*That* arms, but yields as well to stronger foe.

XXXI.

"Had I been charged some castle to maintain,
"And, without contest, on the first assault,
"Hoisted the banners of the hostile train,
"—For cowardice, or treason, fouler fault—
"Upon my eyes (a well deserved pain)
"Thou might'st have justly closed the darksome vault;
"But, yielding to superior force, I read
"I should not merit blame, but praise and meed.

XXXII.

"The stronger is the enemy, the more
"Easily is the vanquished side excused:
"I could but faith maintain as, girded sore,
"The leaguered fort to keep *her* faith is used;
"Even so, with all the sense, with all the lore
"By sovereign wisdom into me infused,
"This I essayed to keep; but in the end,
"To o'ermastering assault was forced to bend."

XXXIII.

So said Sir Odoric; and after showed
(Though 'twere too tedious to recount his suit)
Him no light cause had stirred, but puissant goad.
—If ever earnestness of prayer could boot
To melt a heart that with resentment glowed,
—If e'er humility produced good fruit,
It well might here avail; since all that best
Moves a hard heart, Sir Odoric now exprest.

XXXIV.

Whether or no to venge such infamy,
Youthful Zerbino doubted: the review
Of faithless Odorico's treachery
Moved him to death the felon to pursue:
The recollection of the amity
So long maintained between them, with the dew
Of pity cooled the fury in his mind,
And him to mercy towards the wretch inclined.

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XXXV.

While Scotland's prince is doubting in such wise
To keep him captive, or to loose his chain;
Or to remove him from before his eyes,
By dooming him to die, or live in pain;
Loud neighing, thitherward the palfrey hies
From which the Tartar king had stript the rein;
And the old harridan, who had before
Nigh caused Zerbino's death, among them bore.

XXXVI.

The horse, that had the others of that band
Heard at a distance, thither her conveyed.
Sore weeping came the old woman, and demand
For succour, in her trouble, vainly made.
Zerbino, when he saw her, raised his hand
To heaven, that had to him such grace displayed,
Giving him to decide that couple's fate;
The only two that had deserved his hate.

XXXVII.

The wicked hag is kept, so bids the peer,
Until he is determined what to do:
He to cut off her nose and either ear
Now thought, and her as an example shew.
Next, 'twere far better, deemed the cavalier,
If to the vultures he her carcase threw:
He diverse punishments awhile revolved,
And thus the warrior finally resolved.

XXXVIII.

He to his comrades turned him round, and said;
"To let the traitor live I am content,
"Who, if full grace he has not merited,
"Yet merits not to be so foully shent.
"I, as I find his fault of Love was bred,
"To give him life and liberty consent;
"And easily we all excuses own,
"When on commanding Love the blame is thrown.

XXXIX.

"Often has Love turned upside down a brain
"Of sounder wit than *that* to him assigned,
"And led to mischief of far deeper stain,
"Than has so outraged us. Let Odoric find
"Pardon for his offences; *I* the pain
"Of these should justly suffer, who was blind;
"Blind when I gave him such a trust, nor saw
"How easily the fire consumes the straw."

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XL.

Then gazing upon Odoric, 'gan say;
"This is the penance I enjoin to thee;
"That thou a year shalt with the beldam stay,
"Nor ever leave this while her company;
"But, roving or at rest, by night or day,
"Shalt never for an hour without her be;
"And her shall even unto death maintain
"Against whoever threatens her with pain.

XLI.

"I will, if so this woman shall command,
"With whosoe'er he be, thou battle do.
"I will this while that thou all France's land,
"From city shalt to city, wander through."
So says he: for as Odoric at his hand
Well merits death, for his foul trespass due,
This is a pitfall for his feet to shape,
Which it will be rare fortune if he 'scape.

XLII.

So many women, many men betrayed,
And wronged by her, have been so many more,
Not without strife by knight shall *he* be stayed,
Who has beneath his care the beldam hoar.
So, for their crimes, shall both alike be paid;
She for her evil actions done before,
And *he* who wrongfully shall her defend;
Nor far can go before he finds an end.

XLIII.

To keep the pact Zerbino makes him swear
A mighty oath, under this penalty,
That should he break his faith, and anywhere
Into his presence led by fortune be,
Without more mercy, without time for prayer,
A cruel death shall wait him, as his fee.
Next by his comrades (so their lord commands)
Sir Odoric is unpinioned from his bands.

XLIV.

Corebo frees the traitor in the end,
Almonio yielding, yet as ill content:
For much Zerbino's mercies both offend,
Which thus their so desired revenge prevent.
Thence, he disloyal to his prince and friend,
In company with that curst woman went.
What these befel Sir Turpin has not said,
But more I once in other author read.

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XLV.

This author vouches (I declare not who)
'That hence they had not one day's journey wended,
'When Odoric, to all pact, all faith, untrue,
'For riddance of the pest to him commended,
'About Gabrina's neck a halter threw,
'And left her to a neighbouring elm suspended;
'And in a year (the place he does not name)
'Almonio by the traitor did the same.'

XLVI.

Zerbino, who the Paladin pursues,
And loath would be to lose the cavalier,
To his Scottish squadron of himself sends news,
Which for its captain well might stand in fear;
Almonio sends, and many matters shews,
Too long at full to be recited here;
Almonio sends, Corebo next; nor stayed
Other with him, besides the royal maid.

XLVII.

So mighty is the love Zerbino bore,
Nor less than his the love which Isabel
Nursed for the valorous Paladin, so sore
He longed to know if that bold infidel
The Count had found, who in the duel tore
Him from his horse, together with the sell,
That he to Charles's camp, till the third day
Be ended, will not measure back his way.

XLVIII.

This was the term for which Orlando said
He should wait *him*, who yet no faulchion wears;
Nor is there place the Count has visited,
But thither in his search Zerbino fares.
Last to those trees, upon whose bark was read
The ungrateful lady's writing, he repairs,
Little beside the road; and there finds all
In strange disorder, rock and water-fall.

XLIX.

Far off, he saw that something shining lay,
And spied Orlando's corslet on the ground;
And next his helm; but not that head-piece gay
Which whilom African Almontes crowned:
He in the thicket heard a courser neigh,
And, lifting up his visage at the sound,
Saw Brigliadoro the green herbage browze,
With rein yet hanging at his saddle-bows.

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L.

For Durindane, he sought the greenwood, round,
Which separate from the scabbard met his view;
And next the surcoat, but in tatters, found;
That, in a hundred rags, the champaign strew.
Zerbino and Isabel, in grief profound,
Stood looking-on, nor what to think they knew:
They of all matters else might think, besides
The fury which the wretched Count misguides.

LI.

Had but the lovers seen a drop of blood,
They might have well believed Orlando dead:
This while the pair, beside the neighbouring flood,
Beheld a shepherd coming, pale with dread.
He just before, as on a rock he stood,
Had seen the wretch's fury; how he shed
His arms about the forest, tore his clothes,
Slew hinds, and caused a thousand other woes.

LII.

Questioned by good Zerbino, him the swain
Of all which there had chanced, informed aright.
Zerbino marvelled, and believed with pain,
Although the proofs were clear: This as it might,
He from his horse dismounted on the plain,
Full of compassion, in afflicted plight;
And went about, collecting from the ground
The various relics which were scattered round.

LIII.

Isabel lights as well; and, where they lie
Dispersed, the various arms uniting goes.
Lo! them a damsel joins, who frequent sigh
Heaves from her heart, and doleful visage shows.
If any ask me who the dame, and why
She mourns, and with such sorrow overflows;
I say 'twas Flordelice, who, bound in trace
Of her lost lover's footsteps, sought that place.

LIV.

Her Brandimant had left disconsolate
Without farewell, i' the court of Charlemagne:
Who there expected him six months or eight;—
And lastly, since he came not there again,
From sea to sea, had sought her absent mate,
Through Alpine and through Pyrenean chain:
In every place had sought the warrior, save
Within the palace of Atlantes' grave.

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LV.

If she had been in that enchanted hold,
She might before have seen the cavalier
Wandering with Bradamant, Rogero bold,
Gradasso and Ferrau and Brava's peer.*
But, when Astolpho chased the wizard old,
With the loud bugle, horrible to hear,
To Paris he returned; but nought of this
As yet was known to faithful Flordelice.

LVI.

To Flordelice were known the arms and sword
(Who, as I say, by chance so joined the twain),
And Brigliadoro, left without his lord,
Yet bearing at the saddle-bow his rein:
She with her eyes the unhappy signs explored,
And she had heard the tidings of the swain,
Who had alike related, how he viewed
Orlando running frantic, in his mood.

LVII.

Here prince Zerbino all the arms unites,
And hangs, like a fair trophy, on a pine.
And, to preserve them safe from errant knights,
Natives or foreigners, in one short line
Upon the sapling's verdant surface writes,
ORLANDO'S ARMS, KING CHARLES'S PALADINE.
As he would say, 'Let none this harness move,
Who cannot with its lord his prowess prove!'

LVIII.

Zerbino having done the pious deed,
Is bowning him to climb his horse; when, lo!
The Tartar king arrives upon the mead.
He, at the trophied pine-tree's gorgeous show,
Beseeches him the cause of this to read;
Who lets him (as rehearsed) the story know.
When, without further pause, the paynim lord
Hastes gladly to the pine, and takes the sword.

LIX.

"None can (he said) the action reprehend,
"Nor first I make the faulchion mine to-day;*
"And to its just possession I pretend
"Where'er I find it, be it where it may.
"Orlando, this not daring to defend,
"Has feigned him mad, and cast the sword away;
"But if the champion so excuse his shame,
"This is no cause I should forego my claim.

* Orlando.

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LX.

"Take it not thence," to him Zerbino cried,
"Nor think to make it thine without a fight:
"If so thou tookest Hector's arms of pride,
"By theft thou hadst them, rather than by right."
Without more parley spurred upon each side,
Well matched in soul and valour, either knight.
Already echoed are a thousand blows;
Nor yet well entered are the encountering foes.

LXI.

In scaping Durindane, a flame in show
(He shifts so quickly) is the Scottish lord.
He leaps about his courser like a doe,
Where'er the road best footing does afford.
And well it is that he should not forego
An inch of vantage; who, if once that sword
Smite him, will join the enamoured ghosts, which rove
Amid the mazes of the myrtle grove.

LXII.

As the swift-footed dog, who does espy
Swine severed from his fellows, hunts him hard,
And circles round about; but *he* lies by
Till once the restless foe neglect his guard;
So, while the sword descends, or hangs on high,
Zerbino stands, attentive how to ward,
How to save life and honour from surprise;
And keeps a wary eye, and smites and flies.

LXIII.

On the other side, where'er the foe is seen
To threaten stroke in vain, or make it good,
He seems an Alpine wind, two hills between,
That in the month of March shakes leafy wood;
Which to the ground now bends the forest green,
Now whirls the broken boughs, at random strewed.
Although the prince wards many, in the end
One mighty stroke he cannot scape or fend.

LXIV.

In the end he cannot scape one downright blow,
Which enters, between sword and shield, his breast.
As perfect was the plate and corslet, so
Thick was the steel wherein his paunch was drest:
But the destructive weapon, falling low,
Equally opened either iron vest;
And cleft whate'er it swept in its descent,
And to the saddle-bow, through cuirass, went.

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LXV.

And, but that somewhat short the blow descends,
It would Zerbino like a cane divide;
But him so little in the quick offends,
This scarce beyond the skin is scarified.
More than a span in length the wound extends;
Of little depth: of blood a tepid tide
To his feet descending, with a crimson line,
Stains the bright arms which on the warrior shine.

LXVI.

'Tis so, I sometimes have been wont to view
A hand, more white than alabaster, part
The silver cloth, with ribbon red of hue;
A hand I often feel divide my heart.
Here little vantage young Zerbino drew
From strength and greater daring, and from art;
For in the temper of his arms and might,
Too much the Tartar king excelled the knight.

LXVII.

The fearful stroke was mightier in show,
Than in effect, by which the Prince was prest;
So that poor Isabel, distraught with woe,
Felt her heart severed in her frozen breast.
The Scottish prince, all over in a glow,
With anger and resentment was possest,
And putting all his strength in either hand,
Smote full the Tartar's helmet with his brand.

LXVIII.

Almost on his steed's neck the Tartar fell,
Bent by the weighty blow Zerbino sped;
And, had the helmet been unfenced by spell,
The biting faulchion would have cleft his head.
The king, without delay, avenged him well,
"Nor I for you till other season," said,
"Will keep this gift;" and levelled at his crest,
Hoping to part Zerbino to the chest.

LXIX.

Zerbino, on the watch, whose eager eye
Waits on his wit, wheels quickly to the right;
But not withal so quickly, as to fly
The trenchant sword, which smote the shield outright,
And cleft from top to bottom equally;
Shearing the sleeve beneath it, and the knight
Smote on his arm; and next the harness rended,
And even to the champion's thigh descended.

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LXX.

Zerbino, here and there, seeks every way
By which to wound, nor yet his end obtains;
For, while he smites upon that armour gay,
Not even a feeble dint the coat retains.
On the other hand, the Tartar in the fray
Such vantage o'er the Scottish prince obtains,
Him he has wounded in seven parts or eight,
And reft his shield and half his helmet's plate.

LXXI.

He ever wastes his blood; his energies
Fail, though he feels it not, as 't would appear;
Unharmed, the vigorous heart new force supplies
To the weak body of the cavalier.
His lady, during this, whose crimson dyes
Were chased by dread, to Doralice drew near,
And for the love of Heaven, the damsel wooed
To stop that evil and disastrous feud.

LXXII.

Doralice, who as courteous was as fair,
And ill-assured withal, how it would end,
Willingly granted Isabella's prayer,
And straight to truce and peace disposed her friend.
As well Zerbino, by the other's care,
Was brought his vengeful anger to suspend;
And, wending where she willed, the Scottish lord,
Left unachieved the adventure of the sword.

LXXIII.

Fair Flordelice, who ill maintained descries
The goodly sword of the unhappy count,
In secret grieves, and so laments the prize
Foregone, she weeps for rage, and smites her front:
She would move Brandimart to this emprize;
And, should she find him, and the fact recount,
Weens, for short season will the Tartar foe
Exulting in the ravished faulchion go.

LXXIV.

Seeking him morn and evening, but in vain,
Flordelice after Brandimart did fare;
And widely wandered from him, who again
Already had to Paris made repair.
So far the damsel pricked by hill and plain,
She reached the passage of a river, where
She saw the wretched count; but what befel
The Scottish prince, Zerbino, let me tell.

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LXXV.

For to leave Durindana such misdeed
To him appeared, it past all other woes;
Though he could hardly sit upon his steed,
Through mighty loss of life-blood, which yet flows.
Now, when his anger and his heat secede,
After short interval, his anguish grows;
His anguish grows, with such impetuous pains,
He feels that life is ebbing from his veins.

LXXVI.

For weakness can the prince no further hie,
And so beside a fount is forced to stay:
Him to assist the pitying maid would try,
But knows not what to do, nor what to say.
For lack of comfort she beholds him die;
Since every city is too far away,
Where in this need she could resort to leech,
Whose succour she might purchase or beseech.

LXXVII.

She, blaming Fortune, and the cruel sky,
Can only utter fond complaints and vain.
"Why sank I not in ocean," (was her cry,)
"When first I reared my sail upon the main?"
Zerbino, who on her his languid eye
Had fixt, as she bemoaned her, felt more pain
Than that enduring and strong anguish bred,
Through which the suffering youth was well-nigh dead.

LXXVIII.

"So be thou pleased, my heart," (Zerbino cried,)
"To love me yet, when I am dead and gone,
"As to abandon thee without a guide,
"And not to die, distresses me alone.
"For did it me in place secure betide
"To end my days, this earthly journey done,
"I cheerful, and content, and fully blest
"Would die, since I should die upon thy breast.

LXXIX.

"But since to abandon thee, to whom a prize
"I know not, my sad fate compels, I swear,
"My Isabella, by that mouth, those eyes,
"By what enchained me first, that lovely hair;
"My spirit, troubled and despairing, hies
"Into hell's deep and gloomy bottom; where
"To think, thou wert abandoned so by me,
"Of all its woes the heaviest pain will be."

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LXXX.

At this the sorrowing Isabel, declining
Her mournful face, which with her tears o'erflows,
Towards the sufferer, and her mouth conjoining
To her Zerbino's, languid as a rose;
Rose gathered out of season, and which, pining
Fades where it on the shadowy hedgerow grows,
Exclaims, "Without me think not so, my heart,
"On this your last, long journey to depart.

LXXXI.

"Of this, my heart, conceive not any fear,
"For I will follow thee to heaven or hell;
"It fits our souls together quit this sphere,
"Together go, for aye together dwell.
"No sooner closed thine eyelids shall appear,
"Than either me internal grief will quell,
"Or, has it not such power, I here protest,
"I with this sword to-day will pierce my breast.

LXXXII.

"I of our bodies cherish hope not light,
"That they shall have a happier fate when dead:
"Together to entomb them, may some wight,
"Haply by pity moved, be hither led."
She the poor remnants of his vital sprite
Went on collecting, as these words she said;
And while yet aught remains, with mournful lips,
The last faint breath of life devoutly sips.

LXXXIII.

'Twas here his feeble voice Zerbino manned,
Crying, "My deity, I beg and pray,
"By that love witnessed, when thy father's land
"Thou quittedst for my sake; and, if I may
"In any thing command thee, I command,
"That, with God's pleasure, thou live-out thy day;
"Nor ever banish from thy memory,
"That, well as man can love, have I loved thee.

LXXXIV.

"God haply will provide thee with good aid,
"To free thee from each churlish deed I fear;
"As, when in the dark cavern thou wast stayed,
"He sent, to rescue thee, Anglante's peer;
"So he (grammercy!) succoured thee dismayed
"At sea, and from the wicked Biscayneer.
"And, if thou must choose death, in place of worse,
"Then only choose it as a lesser curse."

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LXXXV.

I think not these last words of Scotland's knight
Were so exprest, that he was understood:
With these, he finished, like a feeble light,
Which needs supply of wax, or other food.
—Who is there, that has power to tell aright
The gentle Isabella's doleful mood?
When stiff, her loved Zerbino, with pale face,
And cold as ice, remained in her embrace.

LXXXVI.

On the ensanguined corse, in sorrow drowned,
The damsel throws herself, in her despair,
And shrieks so loud that wood and plain resound
For many miles about; nor does she spare
Bosom or cheek; but still, with cruel wound,
One and the other smites the afflicted fair;
And wrongs her curling locks of golden grain,
Aye calling on the well-loved youth in vain.

LXXXVII.

She with such rage, such fury, was possest,
That, in her transport, she Zerbino's glaive
Would easily have turned against her breast,
Ill keeping the command her lover gave;
But that a hermit, from his neighbouring rest,
Accustomed oft to seek the fountain-wave,
His flagon at the cooling stream to fill,
Opposed him to the damsel's evil will.

LXXXVIII.

The reverend father, who with natural sense
Abundant goodness happily combined,
And, with ensamples fraught and eloquence,
Was full of charity towards mankind,
With efficacious reasons her did fence,
And to endurance Isabel inclined;
Placing, from ancient Testament and new,
Women, as in a mirror, for her view.

LXXXIX.

The holy man next made the damsel see,
That save in God there was no true content,
And proved all other hope was transitory,
Fleeting, of little worth, and quickly spent;
And urged withal so earnestly his plea,
He changed her ill and obstinate intent;
And made her, for the rest of life, desire
To live devoted to her heavenly sire.

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XC.

Not that she would her mighty love forbear,
For her dead lord, nor yet his relics slight;
These, did she halt or journey, every where
Would Isabel have with her, day and night.
The hermit therefore seconding her care,
Who, for his age, was sound and full of might,
They on his mournful horse Zerbino placed,
And traversed many a day that woodland waste.

XCI.

The cautious elder would not bear away
Thus all alone with him that damsel bland
Thither, where in a cave, concealed from day,
His solitary cell hard by did stand:
Within himself exclaiming; "I convey
"With peril fire and fuel in one hand."
Nor in such bold experiment the sage
Wisely would trust to prudence or to age.

XCII.

He thought to bear her to Provence, where, near
The city of Marseilles, a borough stood,
Which had a sumptuous monastery; here
Of ladies was a holy sisterhood;
And, hither to transport the cavalier,
They stowed his body in a chest of wood,
Made in a town by the way-side; and which
Was long and roomy, and well closed with pitch.

XCIII.

So, compassing a mighty round, they fare
Through wildest parts, for many and many a day;
Because, the war extending every where,
They seek to hide themselves as best they may:
At length a cavalier arrests the pair,
That with foul scorn and outrage bars their way;
Of whom you more in fitting time shall learn,
But to the Tartar king I now return.

XCIV.

After the fight between the two * was done,
Already told by me, the king withdrew
To a cooling shade and river from the sun,
His horse's reins and saddle to undo;
Letting the courser at his pleasure run,
Browsing the tender grass the pasture through:
But he reposed short time ere he descried
An errant knight descend the mountain's side.

* Mandricardo and Rodomont.

Zerbino

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XCV.

Him Doralice, as soon as he his front
Uplifted, knew; and showed him to her knight:
Saying; "Behold! the haughty Rodomont,
"Unless the distance has deceived my sight.
"To combat with thee, he descends the mount:
"Now it behoves thee put forth all thy might.
"To lose me, his betrothed, a mighty cross
"The monarch deems, and comes to venge his loss."

XCVI.

As a good hawk, who duck or woodcock shy,
Partridge or pigeon, or such other prey,
Seeing towards her from a distance fly,
Raises her head, and shows her blithe and gay;
So Mandricardo, in security
Of crushing Rodomont in that affray,
Gladly his courser seized, bestrode the seat,
Reined him, and in the stirrups fixt his feet.

XCVII.

When the two hostile warriors were so near,
That words could be exchanged between the twain,
Loudly began the monarch of Argièr
To threat with head and hand, in haughty strain,
'That to repentance he will bring the peer
'Who lightly for a pleasure, rash and vain,
'Had scrupled not his anger to excite
'Who dearly will the offered scorn requite.'

XCVIII.

When Mandricardo: "He but vainly tries
"To fright, who threatens *me*—by words unscared.
"Woman, or child, or him he terrifies,
"Witless of warfare; not me, who regard
"With more delight than rest, which others prize,
"The stirring battle; and who am prepared
"My foeman in the lists or field to meet;
"Armed or unarmed, on horse or on my feet."

XCIX.

They pass to outrage, shout, and ire, unsheath
The brand; and loudly smites each cruel foe;
Like winds, which scarce at first appear to breathe,
Next shake the oak and ash-tree as they blow;
Then to the skies upwhirl the dusty wreath,
Then level forests, and lay houses low,
And bear the storm abroad, o'er land and main,
By which the flocks in greenwood-holt are slain.

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C.

Of those two infidels, unmatched in worth,
The valiant heart and strength, which thus exceed,
To such a warfare and such blows give birth,
As suits with warriors of so bold a seed.
At the loud sound and horrid, trembles earth,
When the swords cross; and to the stroke succeed
Quick sparks; or rather, flashing to the sky,
Bright flames by thousands and by thousands fly.

CI.

Without once gathering breath, without repose,
The champions one another still assail;
Striving, now here, now there, with deadly blows,
To rive the plate, or penetrate the mail.
Nor this one gains, nor the other ground foregoes;
But, as if girded in by fosse or pale,
Or, as too dearly sold they deem an inch,
Ne'er from their close and narrow circle flinch.

CII.

Mid thousand blows, so, with two-handed swing,
On his foe's forehead smote the Tartar knight,
He made him see, revolving in a ring,
Myriads of fiery balls and sparks of light.
The croupe, with head reversed, the Sarzan king
Now smote, as if deprived of all his might,
The stirrups lost; and in her sight, so well
Beloved, appeared about to quit the sell.

CIII.

But as steel arbalest that's loaded sore,
By how much is the engine charged and strained,
By lever or by crane, with so much more
Fury returns, its ancient bent regained,
And, in discharging its destructive store,
Inflicts worse evil than itself sustained;
So rose that African with ready blade,
And straight with double force the stroke repaid.

CIV.

Rodomont smites, and in the very place
Where *he* was smit, the Tartar in return;
But cannot wound the Sarzan in the face,
Because his Trojan arms the weapon turn;
Yet so astounds, he leaves him not in case,
If it be morn or evening to discern.
Rodomont stopt not, but in fury sped
A second blow, still aiming at his head.

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CV.

King Mandricardo's courser, who abhorred
The whistling of the steel which round him flew,
Saved, with sore mischief to himself, his lord;
In that he backed the faulchion to eschew:
Aimed at his master, not at him, the sword
Smote him across the head, and cleft it through.
No Trojan helm defends the wretched horse,
Like Mandricardo, and he dies parforce.

CVI.

He falls, and Mandricardo on the plain
No more astound, slides down upon his feet,
And whirls his sword; to see his courser slain
He storms all over fired with angry heat.
At him the Sarzan monarch drives amain;
Who stands as firm as rock which billows beat.
And so it happened, that the courser good
Fell in the charge, while fast the footman stood.

CVII.

The African, who feels his horse give way,
The stirrups quits, and lightly from the sell
Is freed, and springs on earth: for the assay
Hence matched anew, stands either infidel.
Worse than before the battle boils, while they
With pride and anger, and with hatred swell,
About to close; but that, with flowing rein,
A messenger arrives to part the twain.

CVIII.

A messenger arrives, that from the Moor,
With many others, news through France conveyed
Who word to simple knight and captain bore,
'To join the troops, beneath their flags arrayed.
'For he, the emperor, who the lilies wore,
'Siege to their quarters had already laid;
'And, save quick succour thither was addrest,
'He read, their army's scathe was manifest.'

CIX.

The Moorish messenger not only knows,
By ensigns and by vest, the warlike pair,
But by the circling blades, and furious blows,
With which no other hands could wound the air;
Hence dared not 'twixt the champions interpose,
Nor deemed his orders an assurance were
From such impetuous fury, nor the saw,
Which says embassadors are safe by law:

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CX.

But to fair Doralice approached, and said,
'Marsilius, Agramant, and Stordilane,
'Within weak works, with scanty troops to aid,
'Were close beleaguered by the Christian train.'
And, having told his tale, the damsel prayed,
That this she to the warriors would explain;
And would accord the pair, and to their post
Dispatch, for rescue of the Moorish host.

CXI.

The lady, with bold heart, 'twixt either foe
Threw herself, and exclaimed; "I you command,
"By the large love you bear me, as I know,
"That you to better use reserve the brand;
"And that you instantly in succour go
"Of our host, menaced by the Christian band;
"Which now, besieged within its camp, attends
"Ruin or speedy succour from its friends."

CXII.

The messenger rehearsed, when she had done,
Fully the peril of the paynim train;
And said, 'that he bore letters to the son
'Of Ulien, from the son of King Troyane.'
The message ended, every grudge foregone,
'Twas finally resolved between the twain,
They should conclude a truce, and till the day
The Moorish siege was raised, their strife delay.

CXIII.

Intending, when from siege their Chivalry
Shall be relieved—the one and the other knight—
No lónger to remain in company,
But bandy cruel war with fell despite,
Until determined by their arms shall be
To whom the royal dame belongs of right.
And she, between whose hands their solemn troth
They plighted, was security for both [5]

CXIV.

DISCORD, at hearing this, impatient grew;
With any truce or treaty ill content:
And that such fair agreement should ensue,
PRIDE, who was present, could as ill consent:
But LOVE was there, more puissant than the two,
Equalled of none in lofty hardiment;
And launching from his bow his shafts of proof,
With these, made PRIDE and DISCORD stand aloof.

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CXV.

To keep the truce the rival warriors swore ;
Since so it pleased her well, who either swayed.
One of their coursers lacked : for on the moor
Lifeless King Mandricardo's had been laid :
Hence, thither, in good time, came Brigliador,
Who, feeding, by the river's margin strayed.
But here I find me at my canto's end ;
So, with your licence, shall the tale suspend.

END OF VOL. IV. OF OLD EDITION.

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NOTES.

NOTES TO CANTO I.

[1] St. ii. l. 1.—I have used the name by which he is best known in French and English legends. He is called Orlando by Ariosto, and Rotolando by some of the more ancient romancers. His name and signature are said to have been seen in certain charters of Charlemagne. In the Latin Chronicles of the middle ages he is called Rutlandus and Ruitlandus.

[2] St. iii. l. 1.—The Cardinal Ippolito d'Este, son of Ercole d'Este, Duke of Ferrara.

[3] St. iv. l. 3.—This Rogero, Ruggiero in the original, is supposed to be Rizieri of Risa, whose name is changed according to the customary transmutation of Venetian letters into their Tuscan equivalents, as *z* into *g*. He, however, is said to have flourished before the time of Charlemagne, and to have died childless. The supposed descent of the family of Este from Rizieri, and their pretensions to be of the blood of Charlemagne, for Bradamant was the niece of that emperor, made Ariosto adopt Rogero as the real hero of his poem.

[4] St. v. l. 1.—Angelica, daughter of Galaphron, king of Cathay, the capital of which was Albracca.

[5] St. viii. l. 1.—Rinaldo, cousin to Orlando, is known by different names, as Renaud and Arnaud. He was eldest son of Amone, in Italian, Aymon, in French, of Monte Albano, or Mont Auban.

[6] St. xi. l. 4.—In the foot-race. Dante uses the same comparison in his Inferno, canto xv., the concluding lines.

> "With that he turned, and seemed as one of those
> Who race upon Verona's spacious plain
> For the green cloth; nor seemed of them who lose,
> But he who the disputed prize will gain.

[7] St. xi. l. 5.—Imitated from Virgil, Æn. II. l. 379.

[8] St. xiv. l. 1.—He was also called Ferraute and Ferracuto. He is said to have been slain by Orlando, who wounded him in the navel, the only vulnerable part about him.

[9] St. xxvii. l. 2.—The continuation of an old story, for which see the *Orlando Innamorato* of Boiardo. Argalia was brother to Angelica.

[10] St. xxx. l. 7.—Almonte in the text, called by others Aimonte. For the rest, these stories, though "half told," develope themselves in the course of the poem.

[11] St. xlii. l. 1.—Translated, and with little variation, from Catullus's beautiful comparison, in his epithalamium on Manlius and Julia. (See Lamb's translation in *Bohn's edition*, p. 228.)

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[12] St. xlv. l. 3.—Sacripant, who is one of Boiardo's *dramatis personæ*, figures more especially in the warfare,

> "When Agrican, with all his northern powers,
> Besieged Albracca, as romances tell,
> The city of Galaphron; from thence to win
> The fairest of her sex, Angelica,
> His daughter, sought by many prowest knights,
> Both paynim and the peers of Charlemagne."
>
> PAR. REGAINED.

[13] St. lxv. l. 5.—An Italian commentator writes more than a page to prove that Ariosto must have meant *il pino grandissimo*, that is, the stone-pine, or *pinus pinea* of Linnæus, with a top like an umbrella; but has omitted the best reason for supposing so; *to wit*, that it is the only pine common in Italy.

[14] St. lxx. l. 3.—Bradamant is also a character in the *Innamorato*, and her story, which forms one of the prettiest episodes in the work, is afterwards taken up where it was dropped by Boiardo.

[15] St. lxxiii. l. 3.—Bayardo, the famous steed of Rinaldo, is said to have been found by Malagigi, the wizard knight, and cousin to Rinaldo, in a grotto, together with a suit of arms and the sword Fusberta, under the watch of a dragon, whom he charmed. Having obtained the prize, he bestowed it upon Rinaldo.

[16] St. lxxv. l. 6.—Angelica, then in love with Rinaldo, through the influence of the fountain of Love, and into whose hands Bayardo fell at Albracca, took care of him, and afterwards returned him to his master, who was among her enemies, he being then under the influence of the Fountain of Hate, as is seen in the text.

One source of love and one of burning hate.

The idea of these two fountains is perhaps taken from Claudian's picture of the gardens of Venus (De Nupt. Honor. et Mar. l. 69.):

> Two fountains glitter to the solar beam;
> This spouts a sweet, and that a bitter stream;
> Where Cupid dips his darts, as poets dream.

The idea of miraculous fountains, (originating probably in the physical effects of some waters,) seems to have been a favourite classical fiction, as exemplified in the two springs in Bœotia, of which one was supposed to increase, and the other to take away, the memory. The belief in these was rife during the middle ages, and indeed extended to a later period; as we find the early discoverers reported, among other wonders, a fountain of youth.

It is possible, moreover, that with the idea of Claudian's two fountains may have been mixed up that of Cupid's two arrows, one of lead and the other of gold; of which the golden one was supposed to instil love, and the leaden hate.

NOTES TO CANTO II.

[1] St. iv. l. 3.—Such accusations are frequent in the *Innamorato*, and seem, as well as the adventure in the Fata Morgana's garden, where Ri-

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naldo's rapacious conduct is contrasted with the disinterestedness of Orlando, to justify Sancho in stigmatizing the son of Aymon and his followers as "greater thieves than Cacus." In fact, *Renaud de Montauban*, or Rinaldo di Mont' Albano, appears to have been the governor of a fortress on the Spanish frontier, and was probably distinguished by what may be considered as the most characteristic attribute of a borderer.

[2] St. x. l. 5.—Fusberta is the name of Rinaldo's sword.

NOTES TO CANTO III.

[1] St. x. ll. 1 and 2.—The story of Merlin is so familiar that it stands in no need of comment, and it is scarcely necessary to add, that the account given here of his death does not vary from the ancient romancers' relations, except in that Ariosto has changed the scene from Britain, the original seat of all sorcery and chivalry, to France.

[2] St. xvii. l. 1.—The beginning of this pedigree is, of course, purely ideal.

[3] St. xxi. l. 6.—A five-sided instrument, as the name imports, constructed with some mystical reference to the five senses, and considered as the best defence against demons in the act of conjuration, &c. It is termed *signum Salamonis* by the cabalists, (the Solomon's seal of which we hear so many wonders in Eastern tales,) and is still relied upon for its powers by the ignorant in Italy, and, probably, elsewhere: though in England it is only known through books.

[4] St. xxiv. l. 3.—This Rizieri, whom Ariosto calls Ruggiero, died without a son.

[5] St. xxv. l. 1.—Pope Adrian called in Pepin to his assistance against Desiderius, the last of the Lombard kings, who was expelled from Italy; and it is for supposed services in this warfare that Rogero, who lived before the time of Charlemagne, is rewarded by that sovereign with the fiefs of Calaon and Este.

[6] St. xxv. l. 5.—Uberto, Count of Este and Commacchio.

[7] St. xxvi. l. 1.—Alberto defeated the Emperor Berengarius the first, who had taken Milan. Hugh, spoken of as bearing the serpents, afterwards the symbol of the duchy, was the son of Albert, as stated in the text.

[8] St. xxvi. l. 6.—The district of Lombardy, in which are situated Milan, Como, Pavia, Lodi, Novara, and Vercelli, the ancient possessions of the Insubri. Azzo the first succeeded to the government of Milan, but was obliged to fly the persecution of Berengarius, and take refuge with Otho the first Duke of Saxony, taking with him his wife, then big with Albertazzo.

[9] St. xxvi. l. 7.—Albertazzo is said to have counselled the calling in of Otho, mentioned above, to the attack and discomfiture of the third Berengarius and his son. He married Alda, the daughter of Otho.

[10] St. xxvii. l. 3.—Gregory V. having fled from Rome, where he was insulted by the citizens, took refuge with the Emperor Otho, whereupon another pope was elected, who, in his turn, retired from this Hugh (Ugo), Otho's general, into the castle of St. Angelo. Hugh replaced Gregory

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in the papal chair. I cannot, however, explain how he could be said to take Otho as well as Gregory out of the hands of the Romans, as Otho was besieging the castle of St. Angelo. He may indeed be said to have broken up the siege, by removing the cause of it.

[11] St. xxviii. ll. 1 and 2.—Hugh and Fulke (Ugo and Fulco) were sons of Albertazzo and Alda, to whose duchy of Saxony, which had devolved to her at the death of her father Otho, Fulke succeeded, making over his possessions in Italy to his brother Hugh. It is from this sucker that the present royal family of England is derived.

[12] St. xxix. l. 2.—Azzo II. had sons Bertoldo and Albertazzo, who resisted Henry II.; in opposition to whom, Rodolph, Duke of Saxony, was chosen. A pitched battle was fought between the rivals, in which Henry was driven out of Italy. On the side of Rodolph was Bertoldo, who figures in the text for his services on that occasion.

[13] St. xxx. l. 5.—Rinaldo, son of the fourth Marquis d'Este, fought against the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, and Octavian, the antipope, in favour of Alexander III.

[14] St. xxxi. l. 1.—This Azzo was elected Podestà of Verona.

[15] St. xxxii. l. 1.—I have preferred English names, or even French, as approaching nearer to our associations, wherever no ridicule attached to them. For this reason I have changed *Obizzo* (accented as a dactyl in Italian) into its French equivalent.

[16] St. xxxii. l. 3.—The Lords of Este, siding with the Guelphs, received from the church the duchy of Spoleto.

[17] St. xxxii. l. 7.—By whom Ezzelino, nick-named the son of the devil, on account of his monstrous cruelties, was defeated, wounded, and taken.

[18] St. xxxiv. l. 2.—Ferrara.—I need hardly add that the Po was the supposed scene of Phaeton's catastrophe, the transformation of his sisters into poplars or larches weeping amber, and of Cygnus into a swan.

[19] St. xxxv. ll. 1 and 2.—Aldobrandino of Este, and first Marquis of Ferrara, obliged Otho IV. to retire into Germany, who had made war on Pope Innocent IV. and driven him into the capital for shelter. Aldobrandino being in want of money to carry on the war, borrowed it of the Florentines, leaving his brother in pledge.

[20] St. xxxvii. ll. 3 and 4.—This space would, I believe, comprehend the old Exarchate of Ravenna.

[21] St. xxxviii. l. 1.—Rinaldo, the son of Azzo, who was poisoned at Naples, where he was confined by Frederic II.

[22] St. xxxviii. last line.—Obizzo, natural son of the last Rinaldo, was legitimated by Pope Innocent III. with the consent of the emperor, and succeeded to the inheritance of Ferrara. He conquered Modena and Reggio.

[23] St. xxxix. l. 5.—In a partial crusade, in the time of Charles II. king of the two Sicilies, Azzo was made standard-bearer, and, for his services, obtained the daughter of that king in matrimony.

[24] St. xl. l. 4.—Niccolo d'Este, and Alberto his brother, obtained Faenza, and were successful in their enterprises.

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[25] St. xli. l. 1.—Rovigo, called in Latin Rhodigium.

[26] St. xli. l. 3.—Commacchio, a town in the Ferrarese, situated between two branches of the Po; whose inhabitants are said to rejoice in storms, because they drive the fish into their marshes, called in the Venetian dialect (of which the Ferrarese seems only a modification) *vali*, or valleys

[27] St. xlii. l. 1.—Nicholas being left an infant by his father Alberto's death, Azzo d'Este, who had been driven from his country, thought of returning, with the assistance of Tydeus, Count of Conio: but was opposed by the child's guardians, who made Nicholas Lord of Ferrara. He afterwards killed Otho III. who had usurped Parma and Reggio—and obtained the grant of those cities by the consent of the inhabitants.

[28] St. xliv. l. 1.—Meaning that of the house of Este.

[29] St. xlv. l. 1.—Lionel and Borso were the natural sons, and Hercules and Sigismond the legitimate sons of Nicholas; who left his legitimate children under the protection of Lionel, who, seizing the government, drove out the brothers, and reigned in their place. His brother Borso, after the death of Lionel, recalled the banished brothers, and educated them as his own children.

[30] St. xlvi. ll. 1 and 2.—Hercules succeeded Borso. He would seem to have been wounded in a battle at Budrio, where he was an ally of the Venetians, against the Romans, and restored the fortune of the day. Budrio is a town in the territory of Ravenna. Barco is a place under the walls of Ferrara.

[31] St. xlvii. l. 3 and 4.—Hercules fought in the service of Alphonso, king of the Catalans, when he, I suppose, fought the single combat alluded to in the text.

[32] St. xlix. l. 2.—The ensign of Venice.

[33] St. xlix. ll. 5 and 6.—His states escaped the oppression of Charles VIII. of France, when he overran the greater part of Italy.

[34] St. l. l. 4.—Alphonso I. the third Duke of Ferrara, and Cardinal Ippolito his brother, both patrons of Ariosto.

[35] St. lii. ll. 5 and 6.—Meaning Rome.

[36] St. liv. l. 1.—Alphonso being at variance with the pope and the Venetians, the pope obtained from Ferdinand, King of Naples, some Spanish troops, who took Bastia, which was retaken under the circumstances stated in the text.

[37] St. lvi. l. 4.—The Ippolito to whom he dedicates his poem.

[38] St. lvi. last line.—The Maro, celebrated in the same stanza, in whom Ariosto might seem to have prefigured himself, is averred by a commentator to have been Andrea Marone, a Ferrarese poet of that day, and the conjecture appears strengthened by the honourable mention made of him in the last canto of the Furioso.

[39] St. lvii. ll. 7 and 8.—Barks and galleys taken by horse and foot sound oddly in an Englishman's ears. The passage alludes to the following exploit. The Venetians going up the Po with a fleet against Alphonso, Cardinal Ippolito went out of the city with some horse and foot, and coming to Volona, a castle near the river, and finding the enemy's galleys

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unprovided, most of the crews being on shore, he sank four of them, and took fifteen, with other smaller craft.

[40] St. lviii. l. 5.—Hercules the second, fourth duke of Ferrara.

[41] St. lxi. l. 7.—Ferrante of Este, natural brother to Alfonso and Ippolito, had conspired with Giulio, his natural brother, to assassinate the duke; but the plot being discovered, they were condemned to perpetual imprisonment. Sir John Harrington tells the following story respecting the origin of this plot. "It happened that Ippolito, and one of these brothers, fell in love with a courtesan, who, showing less affection to Ippolito, was one day very earnestly importuned by him to know what moved her to prefer his brother before him; she answered, it was his beautiful eyes; upon which Ippolito ordered them to be thrust out; but the youth found means to preserve his sight, and, meeting with no redress, by making his complaint to the duke, he, and the other brother here mentioned, conspired to kill him; but, at the time of the execution, their hearts failed them, and the plot being discovered, they were kept in perpetual imprisonment."

[42] St. lxix. l. 2.—Angelica, daughter of Galaphron of Cathay. For this and other thefts of Brunello, see Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato*.

NOTES TO CANTO IV.

[1] St. v. l. 1.—The winged horse, and indeed every thing in the Furioso even to the adventures, has been maintained to be allegorical. An Italian commentator, nearest to the time of Ariosto, pronounces this beast to be a type of Love, reasoning from his wings, his power of transporting man or woman, &c. The whimsical details of his parentage and education are given in stanzas XVIII. and XIX.

[2] St. xi. ll. 4, 5, 6.—Ariosto is in general so correct in his localities, that I suppose he is right in this assertion, though I was unable to verify it in a mountain-tour which I once made in Tuscany.

[3] St. xxxix. ll. 1, 2, 3.—The reader may be tempted to ask why he did not escape before; a thing which seemed as much in his power at one time as at another; but we must not be too jealous about consistencies where magic is concerned.

[4] St. xl. ll. 1, 2, 3, 4.—These are all characters in the *Innamorato;* in which Iroldo and Prasildo are particularly distinguished by their friendship.

[5] St. lii. ll. 7 and 8.—King Arthur is known to every one as the founder of the round table. Galahalt was a son of Sir Launcelot, who was enamoured of Arthur's wife, Ganor, or Gineura; but whose constancy to her was surprised by a princess, who, in consequence, gave birth to Galahalt. This knight achieved the quest of the *sangreal*, or real blood of Christ, as is related in the latter part of the *Mort Arthur*, where that fine old compilation of romances becomes mystical. Sir Gauvaine was more especially distinguished for his courtesy, and Sir Tristram for the same propensity as Sir Launcelot, he being as faithfully attached to Yseult, the wife of King Mark of Cornwall, as Launcelot was to the wife of Arthur, King of Britain.

[6] St. liii. l. 2.—In imitation of Arthur, the romancers attributed also a *round table* to Charlemagne.

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NOTES TO CANTO V.

[1] St. i. l. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.—Alberto Lavezuola, commenting on this stanza, observes—"It would not appear absolutely true that in other descriptions of animals, man excepted, the male does not sometimes war upon the female, and I have read in a worthy author of a he-bear having beat out the eye of a she-bear with his paw." It is certain, however, that the savage beast is infinitely more generous on the point in question than the savage man; and Ariosto, in the latitude allowed to poets, seems to have sufficient grounds for his justification.

[2] St. v. l. 1.—The story of Geneura is familiar to every English reader as forming the plot of MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

Shakespeare has been by some considered as indebted to Ariosto for this tale; but it is clear that he borrowed from a later transcript of it. I cannot trace it higher than the Italian poet, but should have little doubt that he derived it from some ancient novelist.

[3] St. xli. ll. 1 and 2.—The faltering voice and pale face are indications of passion sufficiently obvious and common; but I do not recollect any other author who has alluded to the last circumstance in this description—that bitter, poisonous taste, which is sometimes created in the mouth by any painful and unexpected impression.

NOTES TO CANTO VI.

[1] St. i. ll. 3 and 4.—Perhaps suggested by Juvenal (Sat. viii. l. 149):

"But this is all by night," the hero cries.
"Yet the moon sees! Yet the stars stretch their eyes."

Bohn's Trans., p. 433.

[2] St. xiii. ll. 3 and 4.—Much importance, during the middle ages, and those which immediately followed, was attached to colours, as emblematical of character or situation. Hence Ariodantes chooses black, and the hue of the "sear and yellow leaf," as symbolical of his forlorn condition.

[3] St. xvi. l. 5.—In the original, Dazia; a name which is given to many northern countries.

[4] St. xvii. l. 8.—Translated from Dante's

"Ove Ercole segnò li suoi riguardi."

[5] St. xix. ll. 5, 6, 7, 8.—"Arethusa was a nymph of Elis, daughter of Oceanus, and one of Diana's attendants. As she returned one day from hunting, she sat near the Alpheus, and bathed in the stream. The god of the river was enamoured of her, and pursued her, when Arethusa, ready to sink under fatigue, prayed to Diana, who changed her into a fountain. Alpheus immediately mingled his streams with hers, and Diana opened a secret passage under the earth, and under the sea, where the waters of Arethusa disappeared, rising in the island of Ortygia, near Syracuse, in Sicily. The river Alpheus, too, followed her under the sea, and rose also in Ortygia; so that, as mythologists relate, whatever is thrown into the Alpheus in Elis, rises again, after some time, in the fountain of Arethusa near Syracuse."

[6] St. xxviii. ll. 1 and 2.—For the beginning of the first stanza cited, the

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author is indebted to Dante. See his *Inferno*, canto xiii. Also where Rogero offers, if in his power, to compensate the myrtle for the injury he had inflicted, Ariosto has followed Dante, describing the same prodigy, in his thirteenth canto.

[7] St. xxxiii. l. 1.—Astolpho's transformation into a tree is certainly an improvement of the story of Polydore in Virgil, which is ridiculous, if considered as a natural phenomenon. But magic gets rid of all difficulties. Ariosto is supposed to have selected the myrtle as sacred to Venus, and, therefore, figurative of Astolpho's propensities.

[8] St. xxxvi. l. 8.—The ork (orca), as mentioned here and afterwards in canto viii., is some ideal sea-monster. In a future canto an ork (orco) is described as a cyclops.

[9] St. xxxvii. l. 1.—Every thing in Ariosto has been construed into some secret sense. The fishes, described in a preceding stanza, are all said to denote the different conditions of men who are snared by vice, and the whale is interpreted as a fallacious appearance, which is often mistaken for real happiness.

[10] St. xxxviii. l. 3.—For an account of this fairy, see the Innamorato, where she plays a very conspicuous part.

[11] St. lxi. l. 1.—The captain of this strange crew is Indolence, the source of all evils. His various followers, so fantastically and precisely painted, are evidently various vices distinguished by peculiarities which have not been, and perhaps cannot now be, satisfactorily explained. Eriphila, who afterwards appears, is Avarice, who guards the path that leads to pleasure. By the beautiful damsels who employ Rogero to defeat, and not to slay her, and who rescue him from the deformed rabble, against whom he was contending, is signified, we are told, that though a generous disposition will resist foul and undisguised vice, it often yields readily to temptation, which is masked under fairer appearances.

[12] St. lxxii. l. 5.—Here again colour is significant: green was the symbol of fickleness, as blue was the characteristic of constancy.

NOTES TO CANTO VII.

[1] St. i. ll. 1, 2, 3, 4.—

"Tarda solet magnis rebus inesse fides." OVID.

A yet more marked resemblance to this obvious remark is to be found in the first book of the Golden Ass of Apuleius. 'Nam et mihi et tibi et cunctis luminibus multa usu evenere vera, quæ tamen ignaro relata, fidem perdunt.'

[2] St. iii. l. 3.—In the original flavo (giacinto), which is always interpreted by dictionaries to mean light yellow; but such is not the tint of the jacinth, which may perhaps be considered as tawny.

[3] St. iv. l. 1.—Probably suggested by Horace's

"Quale portentum neque militaris
Daunia in latis alit esculetis," &c.

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[4] St. iv. ll. 5, 6, 7, 8.—We have here one of those half sneers, in which Ariosto occasionally indulges. Was it justifiable? I have never heard the Italian prelacy accused of avarice, nor does it seem a vice very likely at any time to have been inherent in such a body.

[5] St. v. l. 8.—Some of the commentators suppose an oversight in this place. They observe that Rogero came away upon the hippogryph apparently without a lance; and enquire where he could find the one he takes. A knight full armed was usually attended by a squire or valet bearing his lance, and therefore, with the critic's leave, we will suppose that he snatches the lance from an attendant.

[6] St. vii. ll. 7 and 8.—Harrington, translating from the Italian commentators, tells us, that "in Eriphila, overthrown by Rogero and not killed, we may observe that the liberality which men make great show of in their youthful pleasures, is not the true virtue that doth quite extinguish that monster covetousness."

[7] St. ix. ll. 1 and 2.—We have here the personification of pleasure, so common in eastern and western romance; the Circe of the Odyssey, and the Labe of the Arabian knights.

[8] St. xi. ll. 1 and 2.—I once considered the picture of Alcina, which has been esteemed a model of perfect beauty, as uniting qualities which could hardly be found together; as black eyes and eye-brows and light hair. I have, however, seen a portrait, warranted to be an exact resemblance, which is a counterpart to that of Alcina. It is hardly necessary to observe that light hair, from its rarity, is usually esteemed a beauty among the southern people, and hence we read of the Roman ladies supplying themselves with wigs from the heads of the northern barbarians, brought prisoners to Rome.

[9] St. xx. ll. 3 and 4.—The Latian Lord evidently means Mark Antony; but there is some discussion among the old critics, as to whether *he* was designated as such, or Julius Cæsar, the preceding lover of Cleopatra. Ariosto, like Shakespeare, was thinking of the feasts described by Plutarch.

[10] St. xxi. ll. 1, 2, 3, 4.—This would seem to have been some favourite game in Ariosto's age, like our old *questions and commands*.

[11] St. xxiii. ll. 1 and 2.—It was the custom during the middle ages, and continued to later times, to serve cordial or spiced wine upon retiring to rest: this was drunk sometimes in the hall, sometimes in the bed-chamber. The draught was termed in French *le vin de congé*, and in English *the wines*.

[12] St. xxviii. l. 1.—This (in the Italian *zendado*) was a thin species of silk.—See Ducange in vocem *Cendalum*. The word sendal is of constant occurrence in our old English chronicles and romances.

[13] St. xxxii. l. 6.—Birding in these and other modes is still a common sport with the Italians, who, moreover, like their ancestors, justly consider the thrush as a dainty.

[14] St. xxxix. l. 6.—There were many forms for thus obtaining an insight into distant or future events, as the *sortes Virgilianæ*, which we hear were tried so lately as by Charles I. We read in the old Arabian Nights of casting figures in sand for this purpose; but we learn the prettiest conjuration of this kind in the New Arabian Tales, which, though they have been evidently much interpolated, bear strong internal evidence of an

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Arabian origin. Two damsels, attendant upon an island princess of genie race, and themselves fairies, going in search of succour for their mistress, then besieged by her rebellious subjects, find a young man sleeping on the shore, who, they think, may be fit for their purpose. To ascertain who he is, they fill a shell from the sea, and, having plucked a hair from his head, without waking him, cast it into this water. It immediately becomes troubled, and then, clearing itself, reflects a picture of tents, camels, and horses; showing the stranger to be an Arabian.

[15] St. l. l. 1.—Farfarello and Alichino are devils in the Inferno of Dante; but Ariosto has taken the *i* out of Alichino, in order to get him into his verse. Here he has (as on some other occasions) made a sacrifice of propriety to prosody, for Alichino (winged, or rather wingy, from *ali*) has a meaning in the Inferno, which Alchino has not in the Furioso.

[16] St. liv. ll. 1, 2, 3, 4.—In the beginning of the first stanza cited, the reader will recognise an imitation of Homer and Virgil in the mission of Mercury to Ulysses and Æneas. Indeed, all this description is a mosaic, culled from various authors.

[17] St. lv. l. 4.—I do not know whether what was once called cicisbeism took its rise in Valencia, or whether this verse is only allusive to the general effeminacy of the province. The first supposition appears probable.

NOTES TO CANTO VIII.

[1] St. i. ll. 5 and 6.—See Ovid De Arte Am. ii. 99.

[2] St. iv. ll. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.—Hawking, previously to the importation or diffusion of that species of game which are the creatures of cultivation, was almost confined to the pursuit of aquatic birds, and hence this and the sister art of hunting were, during the middle ages, termed *the mysteries of woods and rivers*. The importance attached to them, as exemplified by this very denomination, was not only consonant to the habits of such an age, but arose even out of its necessities: for before the introduction of dry forage, which was not of early origin, the woods and water afforded the only fresh food to be procured during the winter season; those who could not procure such an indulgence being obliged to live on salt provisions; and this, probably, was a cause of leprosy during the middle ages.

[3] St. xiv. ll. 7 and 8.—In the original, *turbine:* which here means a species of involved knot, used formerly in incantation. Perhaps *hag-knot*, which is still employed in the New Forest to designate the tangles in the manes of wild ponies, which are supposed to have been made by witches, to answer the purpose of stirrups, is its best English equivalent.

[4] St. xvii. ll. 4, 5, 6.—The reader must recur to the Innamorato for an account of this spear, with which Astolpho worked wonders, and which is one of Boiardo's happiest instruments.

[5] St. xx. l. 1.—To feel the full force of many of Ariosto's descriptions, the reader should have visited southern countries. I was first made sensible of the force and truth of the original of this stanza during a

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hot and lonely ride in Asia Minor, performed under some anxiety of mind as to its result; and I well remember that the chirp of the cicala with which Ariosto finishes his description, was what appeared to me the most vexatious of all the accompaniments of my disagreeable journey.

[6] St. xxxvii. ll. 1 and 2.—An ancient commentator tells us Ariosto is here indebted to Ovid's picture of Europa carried off by the Bull; but he has copied from it few of his details. For some of these, however, he is indirectly indebted to the fable, having evidently borrowed a few touches of Poliziano, who has two stanzas on a group of Europa and the Bull.

[7] St. li. l. 5.—Ptolemy enumerates five Irish isles, and Pliny fifty, as bearing this name. May it not be, as suggested to me, a corruption of Hebrides?

[8] St. lxii. ll. 7 and 8.—Ariosto, perhaps, meant nothing more than the mere passages of Caucasus, which might seem signified by gates, inasmuch as such are called *ghauts* (meaning the same thing, I believe) in India; and such an expression is used to designate an opening in the hills which divide England and Scotland.

[9] St. lxxi. ll. 5, 6, 7, 8.—Apollonius Rhodius is the inventor of the simile; but it is from Virgil, in his 8th book of the Æneid, that Ariosto has borrowed his illustration (l. 19—25).

[10] St. lxxxiii. l. 6.—This line, in the text,

Non sperar più *gioirne* in terra mai,

is taken, with little variation, from Petrarch's

Non sperar più *vederla* in terra mai;

but Ariosto could not imitate him without transfusing something of a warmer colouring into his copy.

[11] St. lxxxv. ll. 7 and 8.—I cannot find to whom this alludes, but we may presume to some paynim vanquished by Orlando in some anterior romance; though we find no mention of any such in the Innamorato.

NOTES TO CANTO IX.

[1] St. iii. l. 8.—The name of Orlando's sword.

[2] St. xiv. ll. 1 and 2.—This is quite consonant to the spirit of romances of chivalry, and so is indeed every thing in the poems of Boiardo and Ariosto. Thus the Orlando of the Innamorato, fighting with Agrican, grants him respite, that he may rally his troops; and even offers his services for that purpose against the very forces with which he was associated for Agrican's destruction. Thus Rinaldo, in this poem, when in the execution of an embassy, neglects it, and embarks in an adventure which suspends the execution of a solemn and urgent duty. In the same spirit Orlando even delays his quest of his mistress, to succour this damsel, who was unknown to him; though Ariosto has ingeniously softened the extravagance of his conduct by making him reflect that in this expedition he might also serve his Angelica.

[3] St. xv. l. 8.—Ariosto must here mean one of the many of St. Michael's seats in Brittany, and not our Cornish "vision of the guarded Mount:"

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for St. Michael seems to have been a very favourite saint with the Celts of Brittany as well as those of Cornwall.

[4] St. xvi. l. 1.—I can no more explain what Ariosto means by these names, which, as having a Welsh or Breton sound, may be supposed real, than former commentators could what Milton had in view when he spoke of *Namancos*, which he places on the Spanish coast, opposite to St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall. But as Namancos has been found in an old map of Spain, so Breac and Landriglier may perhaps be discovered in one of France.

[5] St. xli. ll. 7 and 8.—This piece of ferocity, which might seem inconsistent with such a character as that of Olympia, in any age, convinces me that this incident of the story, which seems to have been made up of many parts, had a foundation in truth. *Credo quia impossibile est.* I am, however, unable to discover any traces of it anterior to Ariosto's poem. At any rate, the reader will regret that such a trait of brutality was either invented or copied by Ariosto. It is, however, a mere act of justice to observe that he seems to have repented making a Judith of Olympia; for among the alterations of the Furioso, vouched by Galasso, as the intended emendations of his brother Ludovico, the original line

'Io saltai presto e gli segai la gola,'

is changed to

'Poi saltò presto e gli segò la gola,'

the poet thus transferring the consummation of the murder to the servant who had struck down the bridegroom. But even admitting this correction, there is a daring spirit in the woman which is repugnant to our notions of feminine softness, and I cannot help thinking that the interest which she excites, is, in a great degree, owing to the beautiful picture which we have of her when stripped for sacrifice, and fastened to the rock. She is like the Athenian courtesan who, when her cause was going ill, dropped her clothes, and stood naked before her judges.

[6] St. lix. ll. 3 and 4.—Ariosto is here accurate in his geography, in which he almost always observes that of his age. His precision on such points (as where he illustrates the relative position of Alcina's and Logistilla's territories by the boundaries of England and Scotland) is the more remarkable, as he is, I believe, the first among the moderns, who made a study of such proprieties.

[7] St. lxv. ll. 7 and 8.—Volana, not far distant from Ferrara, is one of the mouths of the Po, in which the fish take refuge, and from which their return is intercepted by a net, resembling the Seine.

[8] St. lxvii. ll. 1, 2, 3, 4.—The *zimbello* of the text is a bird used to decoy others, which, together with the birds first taken, is, in Italy, confined with a string, and by the fowler's play made to leap up and flutter; which attracts the notice of the wild birds, who join them, and are taken by a clap-trap. I have seen this practice in Tuscany, where it is styled the *paretajo*. It is, I believe, called the *roccolo* in Lombardy, and is common in Germany, and probably in other parts of the continent.

[9] St. lxix. ll. 1, 2, 3, 4.—The frog-hunter has changed his weapons, and frogs are now fished for in Italy.

[10] St. lxxiii. ll. 6 and 7.—I suppose with collars armed with spikes, as may yet be seen on the wolf-dogs in parts of Switzerland.

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NOTES TO CANTO X.

[1] St. xx. ll. 3, 4, 5, 6.—Here Ariosto has, I think, improved Ovid's description, by turning the woodland-birds into halcyons, whose appearance and plaintive cries seem to harmonize more happily with the scene.

The 'old woe,' lamented by them, was the catastrophe which led to the transformation of Ceyx and Alcyone into halcyons. For Ceyx having been drowned in a tempest, and Alcyone having cast herself into the sea upon the body, the gods, compassionating their misfortune, we are told, operated this prodigy in their behalf.

[2] St. xxv. ll. 1 and 2.—Defoe, that true observer of nature, remarks, that every nation has its peculiar sound indicative of pain and grief, and, it may be added, that different ages have also different signs for expressing their emotions, which symbols appear to be purely conventional. Thus clapping of the hands, now a sign of pleasure and approbation, has been used as expressive of pain; and we read in Dante,

> Harsh tongues discordant—horrible discourse—
> Words of despair—fierce accents of despite—
> Sinking of hands—with curses deep and hoarse.
>
> *Infern.* iii. ver. 25—28.

[3] St. xxxvii. l. 1.—As things often bear the name of the place from which they are received, and not of the country of which they are the production, articles imported from the East were usually called Alexandrian, when Alexandria was the channel through which flowed the commerce of Asia. For this, see our chronicles and romances.

[4] St. lxxi. l. 2.—Ariosto in this and a future passage, where he treats of Asiatic countries, seems to have grafted the discoveries of Marco Polo upon the map of Ptolemy.

[5] St. lxxxii. l. 2.—Those who have been taught that the strength of the ancient English armies consisted in their infantry, will be startled at the mention of mounted archers; but Ariosto is here perfectly right. The English archer (at least latterly) was mounted; but made use of his horse only as a vehicle, as originally was the practice of the dragoon, who, when in action, fought as a foot-soldier. The English archers, indeed, were the yeomanry of the country, and wholly unlike the naked rabble of peasants, who composed the infantry of the other European nations. Hence they were allowed one horse per man (as we find in Anderson's History of Commerce), and sixpence a day, at the time of the battle of Agincourt, being one half of the pay of the esquire or man-at-arms: an allowance which, notwithstanding the depreciation of money, continued to be the stipend of our foot-soldier till within these few years.

[6] St. lxxxv. ll. 5, 6, 7, 8.—We have here a short but sufficiently precise description of the chieftain of a clan, whether highlander or borderer: for it is to be observed, that the southern provinces of Scotland, and indeed the neighbouring English counties, afforded the same examples of such a patriarchal species of authority. This seems to have been clearly of Celtic origin: for the English and Scottish borders were, as well as the highlands, peopled by a tribe of this race, the remnants of Arthur'

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kingdom, which extended as far as from North Wales to Cumberland in England, and the parallel counties in Scotland. The cause, however, of clanship being *maintained* in this line, as well as in the Highlands, is probably to be found in the analogous state of society presented by both districts. Such a custom as clanship would hardly be preserved in any country, after the necessity for it had ceased. Now this *had* ceased under the increasing civilization of the other Celtic provinces; but was yet in force in those, whose pacification had been retarded by moral or physical accidents. In these, clanship was the best protection which could be had in a state of *neighbour warfare*.

It may excite surprise that no mention is any where made of the Highland garb, which might have been turned to some account in this picture; but it must be recollected that the Highlanders do not appear to have been much considered in the time of Ariosto; and indeed may be said to have first risen into consideration by the glorious part they played in Montrose's wars.

[7] St. lxxxvi. l. 1.—I have here been under the necessity of creating a dukedom. The original says, "Il duca di Trasfordia," which is clearly an Italianization of the Latin name of *Transforthia*, applied to a certain district of Scotland, i. e. the parts beyond Forth, for which *Albany* would be the exact equivalent, but which Ariosto has made another fief, and previously disposed of. I do not know, however, where the term is to be found, except in a document belonging to the college of Glasgow, termed the rector's book, commencing about the year 1450. Here it is enjoined that the rector be chosen by four nations of the matriculated members; and of these, the third is entitled *Natio Transforthiana*, and described as including *omnes partes extra Fortham et Stirling et exteros*. Ariosto, who probably received his accounts of North Britain from Scottish students at Padua, appears to have confused the information which he had derived from them. But that he, in his æra, should have been studious of such points appears to me infinitely more extraordinary, than that he should not have always duly sifted and separated the knowledge which he had acquired.

[8] St. xcii. ll. 1 and 2.—St. Patrick was supposed to have made a cave, through which was a descent into purgatory for the living sinner, who was desirous of expiating his evil deeds while yet in the flesh; and in the Advocates' Library at Edinburgh is a curious MS. metrical romance, entitled *Owain Miles*, which contains an account of all the dreadful trials which Sir Owen underwent with this view. Some extracts of this are given in Sir Walter Scott's Border Minstrelsy.

[9] St. cvi. l. last.—Gourds were apparently in Ariosto's time used in Italy for the same purpose as corks are at present by us.

NOTES TO CANTO XI.

[1] St. iii. l. 2.—Xenocrates was a disciple of Plato, famous for his continence.

[2] St. iv. line 1.—All the adventures contained in this and the following stanza are to be found in Boiardo's Innamorato, from her first adventure in

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France and casting the magic sleep upon Malagigi to the stealing of her ring by Brunello in the citadel of Arbracca.

[3] St. xii. l. 3.—Meaning, I suppose, Ovid's Galatæa flying from Polyphemus.

[4] St. xxiv. l. 1.—There is a propriety observed in this order of words; as in fact the use of artillery did (I believe) spread from the Germans immediately to the Italians, the Venetians first making use of it near Chioza; or Chioggia, in their war with the Genoese.

[5] St. xxiv l. 7, xxv. l. 1.—Bombard was, properly speaking, a mortar: culverine, a long piece, which borrowed its denomination from the snake; and saker and falcon light artillery, so called from two species of the hawk.

[6] St. xliv. ll. 7 and 8.—We read in Homer of Neptune's visits to the blameless Æthiopians; but Ovid's Metamorphoses were the great mine whence Ariosto drew his mythological materials, and he had probably in his recollection the passage where the gods are described taking refuge in Æthiopia amid the tumults of the Titanic war.

[7] St. xlv. ll. 1 and 2.—Ino, the wife of Athamas, and Melicerta, her son, were changed into deities of the sea.

[8] St. lxii. ll. 1 and 2.—In the system of education pursued during the middle ages, few means were better suited to the end proposed, than the sort of interchange which was made of sons of princes, and gentlemen who, brought up under other roof than that of their father, were bred in a kind of noble apprenticeship to their calling, amid companions of their own age, secure of kindness (because under friendly, if not kindred, tutelage), but removed from all the risks of parental indulgence.

[9] St. lxviii. ll. 3 and 4.—Curds are called in Italian *giuncate*, because carried in baskets made of the bull-rush, or *giunco*. Hence our word junket, meaning, in its original signification, curd; and, in its secondary, rustic festivity; because curds were formerly the standing dish on such occasions.

[10] St. lxxx. ll. 1 and 2.—So ends this beautiful, though strange episode, made up of classical and Gothic fictions, and in which figure the champion of Christendom, and the heathen god Proteus, who is described as exercising all the powers of an angry and puissant divinity. One of the late translators of the Furioso, in commenting upon this canto of his author's seems here to think him indefensible; and what would justly be thought so glaring an offence against costume in a modern, will probably be deemed in the eyes of many, a defect in Ariosto. But those many, who judge by rule, should, on their own principles, have regard to authority: and by what many and weighty authorities may he not be justified? To come near to our own times; is not the mixture in Lycidas, of "the pilot of the Galilean lake," and of heathen gods and goddesses, "Sleek Panope, with all her sisters," and "old Hippotades," shepherds and bishops, a more anomalous assemblage than that which we find in the story of Olympia? Yet who could wish, except those who pride themselves as philosophical critics, that Milton had conformed to our modern notions of propriety, or who of real poetical feeling subscribes to the censure which Dr. Johnson has pronounced upon this exquisite poem? But if I have been tempted

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to recur to authority, I ought to confess it is not by authorities that Ariosto is generally to be estimated. He will never relish the Furioso who expects to find in it a series of classical reliefs; let him rather come to it as to the contemplation of a magnificent and fanciful arabesque, in which the natural mingles with the extravagant, and the beautiful with the grotesque.

[11] St. lxxxii. ll. 3 and 4.—The ram on which Phryxus escaped from her mother-in-law, and which was afterwards placed in the zodiac, which animal the sun enters in the spring quarter.

NOTES TO CANTO XII.

[1] St. x. ll. 2, 3, 4.—This description may surprise those acquainted but with English antiquities, and who know that the floors of our richest nobles, and even those of our kings, were, in Ariosto's age and long after, covered with rushes, under which the filth and offal of the table was often left to rot. Italy had, however, arrived at as high a pitch of refinement, as may be argued from this stanza, even in the time of Dante; a fact made clear by certain passages in the prose works of that writer, and which were for this purpose cited by Mr. Foscolo in his lectures on Italian literature. What a contrast does she now afford to the times when 'wealth was hers!'

[2] St. xlii. ll. 5 and 6.—Such vows, during the middle ages, were not uncommon even in real life. Thus Froissart tells us of an English knight, who wore one eye covered in consequence of a vow he had made to forego the use of it, till he had taken a certain number of prisoners in the French wars.

[3] St. lviii. ll. 3 and 4.—It may be objected that, though Angelica might vanish by putting the ring in her mouth, her mare, with an empty saddle, must have remained visible, and that this circumstance should have been attended to and explained. But (as I have said elsewhere) there is no end to such objections where there is a question of magic.

[4] St. lix. l. 5.—Speaking comparatively, it was only at a late period of society that the doctrines of Islamism came to be understood in the Christian parts of Europe. Till this epoch we find the Mussulmans constantly charged with polytheism, and Termagant, Tervagant, (or, as he is termed in the Italian, *Trivigante*) is a godhead, frequently associated with Mahommed by the romancers.

[5] St. lxxxii. l. 2.—The original says each *wrinkle* of the soul. Though I have ventured to attempt to naturalize many Italian expressions, I thought this too bold to bear translation; but mention it as illustrative of the spirit of Italian poetry, which prefers particularization to general terms in description, and, as in the present case, seeks to give some individuality of feature to the most imaginary portrait.

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NOTES TO CANTO XIII.

[1] St. vi. ll. 1 and 2.—The poet does not mean Bayonne of Gascony, but Bayonne of Galicia, the capital of his kingdom who made the jousts.

[2] St. xv. l. 1.—Mongia or Mogia is a sea-port town of Galicia.

[3] St. xv. ll. 1, 2.—The gang-board in a galley is laid fore and aft, and on it the rowers pass from stem to stern; a very natural place for securing the mast when unshipped. The castles were wooden imitations of the buildings whose names they bear, and may be seen in the tapestry of the House of Lords representing the defeat of the Spanish Armada. A memorial of the word is still preserved in our term of fore-castle. The cutting away such top-lumber would of course tend materially to lighten a vessel in a storm.

[4] St. xvii.—The reader will recollect the sailors resorting to the manœuvre mentioned in the text, in the story of St. Paul's shipwreck, which may show how common was the practice attributed to the Biscayneer. While I am upon this subject, I cannot resist the temptation of relating a story arising out of it; because it will show how local experience removes difficulties, even of a graver nature than those which I have here attempted to explain. It happened that the lesson, which made part of one Sunday morning's service, read on board a king's ship in the Mediterranean, was that in which St. Paul gives a description of this shipwreck; and some of the men were observed to exchange significant glances at the idea of anchoring from the stern in the situation he described. A few days afterwards the ship arrived at the very island which is the supposed scene of the catastrophe, and moored in the port of La Valletta, in which lay some Greek vessels, whose high sterns might have preserved them from the danger incidental to anchoring from such a part. Many of the sailors were observing these, whose construction was new to them, and one was heard to say to a comrade: "You see, Jemmy, the saint was no such lubber as we took him for."

[5] St. xxxvi. ll. 7 and 8.—I have preserved the most popular reading; but it seems that the old editions read Chiron instead of *Charon*, (and so too Panizzi). It was not the business of Charon, the ferryman of hell, to keep damned souls in the *boiling deeps*, but to transport such across them; whereas this is the office assigned by Dante to Chiron, with the centaurs, his companions, who in the seventh circle of hell, watch over lakes of boiling blood, in which are immersed sinners of the description of him in the text. See Dante's Inferno, canto xii.

[6] St. xl. l. 2.—"The fabulous history of these wars (Charlemagne's) was probably written towards the close of the eleventh century, by a monk, who thinking it would add dignity to his work to embellish it with a contemporary name, boldly ascribed it to Turpin, who was archbishop of Rheims about the year 773. This is the book so frequently quoted by Ariosto."—*Ellis's preface to Way's Fabliaux.*

[7] St. lix. l. 5.—Isabella, a lady eminent for her many virtues, daughter of Hercules, duke of Ferrara, sister of Alfonso and Ippolito, and wife of

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Francisco Gonzaga, lord of Mantua, the city situated on the Mincius 'of Ocnus, mother hight,' to wit of Manto, the daughter of Tiresias, otherwise called Bianor, who, after the destruction of Thebes, is said to have fled to Italy, and established herself among the swamps of the Mincius, a place which she found favourable to the prosecution of the arts in which she had been initiated by her father. Here her son Ocnus is said, after his mother's death, to have founded a small city which he called Mantua, in honour of her memory. Dante's account of the wanderings and settlement of Manto, which, however, says nothing of Ocnus, and makes Manto a virgin, affords a good specimen of his powers of precise and picturesque local description.—See Inferno, canto xx. l. 50, p. 101 of Cary's translation, Bohn's edition.

[8] St. lx. ll. 5 and 6.—Ariosto alludes to the victory gained by Gonzago, duke of Mantua, upon the river Taro, over Charles VII. of France, and the expulsion of the French from the kingdom of Naples.

[9] St. lxi. ll. 5 and 6.—*i. e.* I should embark on a more immeasurable sea than that traversed by the Argonauts: for Typhis was the pilot of the Argo.

[10] St. lxii. l.—This was Beatrice, the wife of Ludovico Sforza, who lost his dukedom soon after her death; a circumstance which explains the remainder of the stanza.

[11] St. lxiii. ll. 1 and 2.—The Viscontis were lords of Milan, and the snake was the armorial bearing of the Viscontis and Milanese.

[12] St. lxiii. ll. 4 and 5.—From India to the straits of Gibraltar.

[13] St. lxiv. l. 1.—That is to say, shall bear the same name of Beatrice. The one who was to wreathe her hair with Pannonia's crown was Beatrice, daughter of Ferdinand, king of Naples, sister of Leonora, duchess of Ferrara, and wife of Mathias Corvinus, king of Hungary, *i. e.* Pannonia. The other lady alluded to was Beatrice d'Este, canonized at Rome.

[14] St. lxvii. l. 1.—Richarda, wife of Nicholas d'Este, found herself in the situation ascribed to her in the text. Her son Hercules, dispossessed of his lordship by Lionello and Borso, was obliged to go into exile, and take refuge with Alphonso of Arragon, but in the end fully recovered his inheritance.

[15] St. lxix. l. 1.—The Hercules mentioned in the preceding note, took to wife Leonora, daughter of Ferdinand, king of Arragon, with whom he had taken refuge, which Leonora brought him the Alphonso, Ippolito, and Isabella, celebrated by the poet.

[16] St. lxix. l. 5.—Lucretia Borgia was a daughter of Pope Alexander VI., who was three times married, and took for her third husband Alphonso, duke of Ferrara.

[17] St. lxxii. ll. 1 and 2.—Renata was daughter of Louis XII. of France, and Anne of Bretagne, and daughter-in-law of Lucretia Borgia, since she was married to Hercules the Second, her son, who was lord of Ferrara after the death of his father.

[18] St. lxxiii. l. 1.—Ada was the daughter of Otho, whom we read of as given in wedlock to Albertazo in the third canto, in which the other ladies mentioned in this stanza are also commemorated.

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NOTES TO CANTO XIV.

[1] St. ii. l. 3.—Alphonso d'Este, duke of Ferrara; to whom the poet attributes the victory and subsequent capture of Ravenna, held for the pope by Fabrizio Colonna, the struggle being between French and Italians under this leader, and Spaniards and Italians under the command of Gaston de Foix; for, the French troops having given way, Alphonso coming up with a band of gentlemen, again turned the fortunes of the field.

[2] St. iii. ll. 7 and 8.—The insignia of knighthood conferred by Alphonso upon many of his young followers on the field of battle. 'To win his spurs' was almost a proverbial expression; how applied to the Black Prince by our Edward III. every one will remember.

[3] St. iv.—The golden oak was the bearing of Pope Julius II., who lost Ravenna; and the red and yellow truncheon, we are told, is to be considered as the symbol of Spain. Fabrizio Colonna surrendered to Alphonso on condition he should not be delivered up to his enemies the French; Alphonso resisted their solicitations to consign him to them, and afterwards set him free and restored him to the pope.

[4] St. v. ll. 1 and 2.—In the original,

La gran colonna del nome Romano
Che voi prendeste e che serbaste intera,

a play upon the name of Fabrizio Colonna, which is necessarily sacrificed in an English translation.

[5] St. vi. l. 3.—Of Gaston de Foix, the French general, who perished in the field.

[6] St. vii. ll. 3 and 4.—The allied Spanish and papal army, if victorious, would probably have turned their arms against the dukedom of Ferrara.

[7] St. ix.—Brescia was sacked a short time before Ravenna. The fate of this last city terrified Faenza and Rimini into a surrender. Trivulzio may have been well fitted to restrain the excesses of others, but was not himself free from a similar reproach. He was a native of Milan, and banished from thence for his adherence to the Guelph party. He entered the service of France, and obtained great distinction in the wars of Charles VIII., Louis XII., and Francis I. He was made governor of Milan in 1500, and of Genoa in 1504. But he is accused of a rapacious administration of power, and of a haughty, ungovernable temper, and on this account forfeited the favour of Francis; which is said to have occasioned his death in 1518. His epitaph speaks his character.

[8] St. xi. l. 1.—Ariosto is not more successful than Homer in this catalogue, and the same observation may be made on the review of Tasso, which is only animated by his apostrophe to the Greeks.

[9] St. xxv. ll. 5 and 6.—It is hardly necessary to observe that Sagittarius is the sign into which Chiron is said to have been translated, and is, therefore, always represented by a Centaur.

[10] St. xxxi. ll. 3 and 4.—The account of the conquest of the arms of

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Hector in the Syrian fairy's castle is to be found in the Innamorato, where Mandricardo takes the oath specified in the text.

[11] St. l. ll. 1 and 2.—Ariosto would appear to have sometimes inserted anecdotes of his age in the Furioso; but these are usually so altered that they are scarcely to be recognised. This is not the case with the present story, the rape of Doralice; in which the poet appears to have figured a similar atrocity and of recent occurrence, perpetrated by Cæsar Borgia, near Cesenna, on the shore of the Adriatic, upon an illustrious lady espoused to a Venetian captain, to whom she was journeying, under the escort of a train of nobles and ladies, who were attacked with the same violence that is described in the text.

[12] St. lxxxvii. l. 4.—Dante says of this angel, whose figure is represented as sculptured in purgatory,

'Giurato si saria ch' ei dicesse *Ave.*'

Probably as saluting the Virgin, a favourite subject with the Italian masters.

[13] St. cxii. l. 5.—Vertot describes the Maltese as casting hoops charged with wild-fire among the Turks at the famous siege: it is said, without any authority for the fact, for which he was perhaps indebted to Ariosto.

[14] St. cxx. l. 4.—A marshy place in the Ferrarese.

[15] St. cxxi. ll. 1, 2, 3, 4.—A wooden and movable *bartizan*, a kind of a stage, moving upon hinges, within the wall of a fortification, which being raised to a horizontal position, served as a means of communication between the towers, and made the bridge spoken of by Ariosto.

[16] St. cxxvi. l. 1.—I have translated the account of this storm very literally; and it is curious, as probably exhibiting the modes of attack and defence practised in the time of Ariosto. It appears, to sum his story in a few words, that the wall on the side where the Moors attacked was surrounded by a *wet* ditch, through which Rodomont plunged at the head of the storming party, scaled the wall, and carried the *bertesca*, or wooden platform, placed within it and near its summit. Beyond this work, it seems, was a second wall, or dyke, divided from the first by a *dry* ditch, into which Rodomont drives his party of assailants, urging them to the assault of the interior wall, and he himself leaping the ditch, and, like Alexander at the siege of Oxydracæ, mounting the last defence, and springing from it into the city. His followers, in the meantime, while planting their ladders against the interior wall in this second moat, are consumed by combustibles, with which it had been previously filled by the Parisians. Rodomont, it is to be recollected, had escaped the effects of the explosion by his desperate leap, and is left enclosed in the middle of the city.

NOTES TO CANTO XV.

[1] St. ii.—He alludes to the victory obtained at Francolino, about forty miles above the mouth of the Po; to which he had before referred.

[2] St. xvi.—The geography is here wofully confused; and Astolpho cannot be followed even on the map: for east and west are confounded in

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this course. But reasoning from some of Ariosto's descriptions, it would seem that he had attempted to graft the discoveries of Marco Polo upon the map of Ptolemy. It is scarcely necessary to observe that the land of Thomas is the Malabar Coast, where St. Thomas, the companion of our Saviour, was supposed to have preached the Gospel, and where Vasco de Gama found a species of Christianity established.

[3] St. xvii.—The golden Chersonese of Ptolemy has been conjectured to be the kingdom of Sumatra: I think, with reason, nor does the fact of its being an island necessarily militate against such a supposition; for the neck of land, which connects it with *terra firma*, is very narrow; and navigators have in all ages mistaken peninsulas for islands, and islands for peninsulas. Thus, Van Diemen's Land was supposed to be a part of the continent of New Holland, till the (comparatively speaking) late penetration of Bass's Straits. Taprobana is the island of Ceylon, and Cori is, I suppose, Cape Comorin. The sea, which

"frets between two shores,"

must be the strait between. Cochin China is here placed at the western instead of the eastern extremity of India; for it must be recollected that Astolpho was directing his flight westward.

[4] St. xxi. ll. 7 and 8.—This is, I suppose, the *Ram*, in which the sun passes the Equinoctial Line towards the north.

[5] St. xxv.—Charles the Fifth, who was born at Ghent.

[6] St. xxvii. ll. 7 and 8.—The reader will recollect that Columbus expected to reach the East Indies by steering due west, and that America was long considered as the western extremity of the East Indies.

[7] St. xxviii.—The names of Prospero Colonna and the great Pescara are of too frequent occurrence in the history of Charles the Fifth to require a comment. For the youth of Vasto or Guasto, as he is usually called by tramontanes, I do not know how or when he deserved the praise ascribed to him in the succeeding stanza, though he certainly served with much distinction in those Italian wars.

[8] St. xxxii.—The poet alludes to the Emperor Charles V. having been conducted by Doria's galleys from Barcelona to Genoa, from whence he was escorted by him to Bologna, in which town he received from Pope Clement the crown of the empire. He might have made himself arbitrary in Genoa by the assistance of Charles.

[9] St. xxxiii. l. 4.—Meaning England. Astolpho was an Englishman.

[10] St. xxxiv. ll. 7 and 8.—I will observe, in illustration of these lines, that Charles V. conferred on him the principality of Melsi in Puglia.

[11] St. xxxvii. l. 4.—Foscari informs us that a gulf in the Persian sea was so called.

[12] St. xxxix. l. 8.—The poet must mean Egypt; but I do not know why he styles it the land of heroes: perhaps as the land of the Ptolemies, or perhaps as distinguished by the exploits of the crusaders.

[13] St. xl. l. 1.—The canal by which Trajan connected the Nile and the Red Sea.

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NOTES TO CANTO XVI.

[1] St. xi. l. 1.—This distinguished city of Cyprus is now called Leukosia (Λευκοσία), or at least is so called by the modern Greeks. Nicosia was, however, there is no doubt, its classical designation. It probably bore both names, and the colloquial one has remained at home, while the place is known by another abroad.

[2] St. xxiii. ll. 1, 2, 3, 4.—

Immanem veluti pecora inter inertia tygrim, &c.—VIRGIL, Æn. ix. 730.
"Like a fierce tiger pent amid the fold."—DRYDEN.

Virgil makes Ætna the mountain under which Typhœus is buried; but Petrarch supposes him to have been confined under Ischia.

[3] St. xxxvii. ll. 5, 6, 7, 8.—Ariosto had read of England's having suffered from pirates, and could form no other notion of these than that of Moorish corsairs.

NOTES TO CANTO XVII.

[1] St. x. ll. 7 and 8.

"And gilded roofs come tumbling from on high,
The marks of state and ancient royalty."
VIRGIL (DRYDEN, B. ii.).

[2] St. xi. l. 3.—Qualis ubi in lucem coluber, &c.

See Virgil's description of Pyrrhus in the storm of Troy, of which this stanza is a free translation. Æn. ii. 471.

[3] St. xiii. l. 5.—So Virgil, Æn. ii. 486.

"The house is fill'd with loud laments and cries;
And shrieks of women rend the vaulted skies.
The fearful matrons run from place to place,
And kiss the thresholds and the posts embrace."—DRYDEN.

An example of such passionate action, which may appear unnatural to many, was in modern times furnished by the late king and queen of Naples, under circumstances of less excitement, who, when restored by Lord Nelson, ran about their palace at Naples, kissing and embracing the doors.

[4] St. xiv. ll. 3, 4, 5, 6.—These are all events described in the romances anterior to the Innamorato, and many of them are referred to in that poem.

[5] St. xx. ll. 1, 2, 3, 4.—Every one who has been on the Continent, and indeed every one who is conversant with old paintings, may acquire a general idea of such a picture; but it is necessary to have been in Italy to form to oneself a perfect notion of the details of these scenes, in which Ariosto seems so particularly to delight. So studiously elegant are the townspeople of some parts of the Italian peninsula, that at an annual festival held at a burgh near Rome, where the pavement, as in Damascus, is strewed with foliage, beautiful centre-pieces for this green ground are composed with leaves of rich flowers on thin deal planks, and inserted in it at

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such intervals as to produce the effect of figured carpeting. Ariosto paints these scenes in the true spirit of an Italian.

[6] St. xxvii. l. 1.—Carpathium, an island between Rhodes and Crete, gave its name to the neighbouring sea.

[7] St. xxx. ll. 1, 2, 3, 4.—An orc in Ariosto seems intended to convey the idea of some monster like a *buggaboo*, whose genus and form are not defined by the name. In the tale of Olympia the orc is a sort of whale. Here he is a Cyclops, in consistence with the account given of him in a story of the Innamorato, of which this episode is a continuation.

[8] St. xl. l. 8.—"The poet took this custom of the orc from the cannibals," says an Italian commentator: but I am ignorant upon what authority he grounds his assertion. On the contrary, one of the fathers talks about certain ancient cannibals, who more especially preferred feeding upon the flesh of woman to that of man. The orc, roc, or rukh, figures largely in the 'Arabian Nights' as a monstrous bird. But it is difficult to suppose that Ariosto had access to these tales.

[9] St. lxxvi. l. 1.—He alludes to the enterprise against Africa, undertaken and abandoned by Charles V.

[10] St. lxxviii. l. 4.—It is hardly necessary to observe, that when Constantine transferred the seat of empire to Constantinople, the riches left by him formed the endowment of the Latin Church. Ariosto is here evidently indulging in one of his quiet sneers; for, though a catholic, he was no more a papist than Dante.

NOTES TO CANTO XVIII.

[1] St. xvii. l. 1.—This picture of Rodomont, enclosed within the walls of Paris, and swimming the river to free himself from his enemies, is (it is hardly necessary to say) taken, in all its details, from that of Virgil's Turnus.

[2] St. xxiii. l. 6.—Perhaps Shakespeare, who was indebted to the Italians for many modes of expression, through contemporary translations, took from this the King of Denmark's exclamation of

"Oh! my offence is rank; it stinks to heaven."

[3] St. xxvii. ll. 7 and 8.—I have forborne all remarks upon this allegory of Discord, Pride, Hypocrisy, &c., as a subject which has been too much canvassed to require new comments in a series of notes intended to be less critical than explanatory. But it may be remarked how much of reality as well as of spirit has been given to all these very abstract personages, by the consistency and exactness of the details.

[4] St. lxix. l. 4.—This servile sort of salutation is said to have originated in the Greek empire. It certainly exists there at present; and I well remember that, riding in the neighbourhood of Constantinople, I had my thigh embraced by a Greek beggar, on whom I had bestowed three or four paras.

[5] St. lxxiv. l. 7.—From Tripoli of Syria to Tortosa in Phœnicia; the Orthosia of Ptolemy.

[6] St. lxxvii. l. 1.—Cities of Syria, as I am informed by Fornari.

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[7] St. cix. ll. 5 and 6.—This adventure, the heads of which are only touched by Ariosto, is fully related in the Innamorato. I may observe, that one of Brunello's feats of this description, achieved before Albracca, has been imitated in the story of Don Quixote, where Gines de Passamonte steals Sancho's ass from under him. Indeed Cervantes has drawn many of his incidents from the romance of Boiardo.

[8] St. cxxxv. l. 5.—An old commentator says, that Luna was an ancient seaport in the Genoese territory, on the remains of which another town was built, termed Sarazana. Its name is still perpetuated in an Italian marble quarried in its neighbourhood, which is denominated *marmo lunense*.

[9] St. cxxxvi.—The effect of the best sea-air upon modern iron in this country, would be that which the poet attributes to the worst in his southern seas. It is a different thing in the Mediterranean, and there is in Torzelo, an islet of the Adriatic, a church of the middle-ages, with stone window shutters, hung upon iron pivots, which have undergone no oxidation. I do not know from personal observation, that the *malaria* produces the effect ascribed to it in the text; but think it highly probable, for there are some parts of Venice where plate tarnishes from the effects of the atmosphere; and this is considered by the inhabitants as a test of worse air than what prevails in places where it continues unsoiled. The partial prevalence of the *malaria*, which is, generally speaking, notorious, is more especially remarkable in Cyprus.

[10] St. cxliii. ll. 5 and 6.—To lower (*ammainare*) is a common practice in Mediterranean vessels (the masts of which often consist of what appears to be a single stick), and it is a simple and excellent manœuvre in seas where the squalls are often as sudden and partial as they are impetuous. I was once in the sea of Marmora, then perfectly smooth, in a polacca, which ran two streaks of her deck under water, in *a white squall*; when at the magic word *mainar* (the contraction of *ammainare*) the sails came down bodily upon deck, and the vessel, righting herself, swam upon an upright keel.

[11] St. clxvi. ll. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.—Here we have an imitation of the Nisus and Euryalus of Virgil; whom, indeed, Ariosto has imitated closely in almost all the night adventures which follow. The best, however, the affecting incident of Labretto, is, I believe, entirely his own.

[12] St. clxxv. ll. 7 and 8.—Mount Martyr (*Mont Martre*) is a suburban town of Paris, and situated a little to the north of it. Mount Lery (*Montlheri*) is a town, or rather, I believe, a city, with a high tower for its citadel, built also on a mount, about twelve or fourteen miles to the southward of Paris. It is distinguished as having been taken in the Burgundian wars, and as having been a place of battle between the royalists and leaguers. It is, however, yet more familiar to the Parisians from having been celebrated by Boileau, in the opening of the third canto of his *Lutrin*, who makes it the birth-place of his owl. His lines will be duly estimated by every one who has travelled a long time within sight of a tower, from which it seems impossible to escape, and that of Montlheri may indeed be considered as the most *enduringly* visible of all towers, being built on an eminence in a country generally flat.

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" But frightful night forthwith the shadow of her wings
O'er the vine-covered plain of the Burgundians flings,
T'wards Paris flies again, and, hastening her return,
Mountlery's famous tower already does discern.
Its walls, whose top withdraws itself from sight, aspire and shroud,
Built on a rocky mound, their turrets in the cloud,
And with their tiresome object still facing him who flies
From far, appear to follow the traveller's wearied eyes.
A thousand frightful birds, a thousand funeral crows,
Inhabit the dark void these deserted walls enclose."

NOTES TO CANTO XIX.

[1] St. xii. ll. 1 and 2.—Creon, the tyrant of Thebes, prohibited, under pain of death, the burial of Polinices, &c.

[2] St. xxi. ll. 1, 2, 3, 4.—Surgery was practised by ladies of the highest birth in Europe during the middle ages, and probably in Asia till a later era; for in the ruder periods of society the useful, and not the ornamental, arts were held in the highest honour.

[3] St. xxxii. l. 2.—He was one of the most furious of her lovers in the Innamorato.

[4] St. xxxviii. ll. 1 and 2.—This is also a reference to a story in the Innamorato.

[5] St. xlvi. ll. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.—Limisso, a city of Cyprus, by Ptolemy called Cario, and Satalia, a royal city, situated upon the shore of Pamphilia, formerly called Attalia.

[6] St. l. ll. 6, 7, 8.—An electric flame, said to be often visible in the Mediterranean, and the warrant of fine weather, when assuming a particular figure. It lights upon the masts and yards. I never saw it in that sea, but have seen it upon the beach in England, flaming on a sailor's woollen cap, at the first beginning of a thunderstorm, and thus justifying the story of Castor and Pollux. The flame descended upon the boat, as the most natural place to light upon, in the absence of masts and yards.

[7] St. liii. ll. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.—The manœuvre expressed in these lines would aggear to have been a nautical usage in the time of Ariosto, and possibly may be practised still. For the way of a light vessel, with a shallow draft of water, as ships were then constructed, and as many Mediterranean vessels are now, might assuredly be at least somewhat impeded by such a drag as is described. "*From him*," meaning St. Elmo, before alluded to, a saint of great Mediterranean, and particularly of great Neapolitan, reputation; to which he has a more especial claim, as the town of Gaeta in that territory possesses his bones.

[8] St. lxxiv. l. 3.—Chace is in tennis somewhat of an equivalent to hazards at billiards, and is a term sanctioned by Shakespeare in his Henry V.

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NOTES TO CANTO XX.

[1] St. i. ll. 5, 6, 7, 8.—Harpalice was a Thracian virago, who freed her father, made prisoner by the Getæ. Virgil, speaking of her, Æn. xi., 316, says,

"With such array Harpalice bestrode
Her Thracian courser, and outstripp'd the rapid flood."
DRYDEN.

Camilla has been made too notorious by him in Æneas's Italian Wars to require further mention. Sappho has as little need of it. Of the Corinnas (there were three) it is not clear to which Ariosto alludes; probably to her who was the supposed mistress of Ovid, or to the yet more famous woman of that name, who vanquished Pindar in a poetic contest.

[2] St. x. ll. 1 and 2.—As we have seen Ariosto, in the preceding canto, making up his fable of the Amazons out of different classical stories, so we may here detect him in the same species of manufacture. We have a jumble and alteration of stories, Messenian, Scythian, and Trojan. Phalantus, who led off the youth that were the offspring of the Spartan ladies' gallantries, though not during the Trojan war, went straight to Italy, where he founded, or where he restored Tarentum, as stated by the poet.

[3] St. lxxxii. ll. 3 and 4.—Calisto, daughter of Lycaon, who having been violated by Jupiter, was, by Juno, metamorphosed into a she-bear, and again by Jupiter into the constellation called the Bear, or Bootes' Wain; and as this constellation only disappears towards morning, the poet designates the dawn by the retreat of Calisto, whom he decribes as turning her plough, instead of her wain, in order to depart: for this constellation taking its name from the position of some of its stars resembling that of oxen in harness, might perhaps as fairly be likened to one as to the other. This story of the Amazons (more especially Guido's relation) may serve as a specimen of that tone of prosing and repetition with which Ariosto has been reproached. I cannot, however, at all agree with those who condemn *him* for the 'lungaggini' which are usually objected to the Italian writers. I suspect him of much cunning and design in many of his apparent defects, especially in his prosing, and am much pleased to find that I am supported in this opinion by high authority, the late Mr. Fox.

NOTES TO CANTO XXI.

[1] St. lix. l. 1.—Ariosto has taken this incident from the *Golden Ass* of Apuleius, whom he has copied in many of his details.

[2] St. lx. lxi.—"*Unless you take the say*," is an idiom which shows the occasional necessity for resorting to the time of Elizabeth in search of equivalents for phrases relating to customs now disused. The phrase of *to take the 'say* (a taste of the meat as a precaution against poison) is common in our old writers.

[3] St. lxiv.—In this stanza, Ariosto has again followed closely in the foot-

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steps of Apuleius. There are, however, many circumstances of invention in this episode, such as the simile of the hawk and dog, &c., which, giving his peculiarity of touch to the picture, show how well he could assimilate and make his own, whatever foreign graces he thought worthy of adoption. I may here remark with what felicity and discrimination he always paints the character of woman; the fidelity and fondness of Isabella, the coquetry of Angelica, the exalted character of Olympia, uncompromising in her love or hate, and the abandoned wickedness of Gabrina, a true though fearful picture of what woman is, when she utterly abandons the reins to her passions. This discrimination appears to me strikingly exemplified in the character of his two viragos. Bradamant and Marphisa, though equally brave, and, by the vagrant and unfeminine life which they lead, equally subjected to the same coarse suspicions, always appear to us in very different lights. The mere circumstance of his having armed one with a golden spear, with which she tilts her enemies out of their saddles, and the other with a sabre to hack and hew, makes all the difference. If one could love an Amazon, it would be Bradamant; but one might as well think of falling in love with Moll of Flanders as with Marphisa.

NOTES TO CANTO XXII.

[1] St. ii. ll. 7 and 8.—She was the only one of the fifty sisters, daughters of Danaus, who spared her husband, when the others, at the instigation of the father, murdered theirs.

[2] St. vii. ll. 1 and 2.—The fact of Ardennes being the name of a forest in France, and Arden in English, is to be explained by their Celtic derivation, *ar*, great, and *denne*, a wood. Hence Denney-walk in the New Forest, &c.

[3] St. xxxvi. ll. 3 and 4.—It is hardly necessary to observe that *Vallombroza* is a convent in the Apennines: since it has been made almost as familiar to English, as it is to Italian ears, by the poetry of Milton.

[4] St. xlviii. ll. 1, 2, 3, 4.—This is in the true spirit of romance, and romance was but an exaggerated picture of real life, as it existed during the middle ages. Mr. Ellis, in his preface to Way's Fabliaux, observes: "The reader, who is accustomed to the regularity of civilized life, cannot survey without astonishment the detail of confusion that prevailed in those times of feudal barbarism. The universal fondness for the pleasures of the chase, and the general contempt for agriculture, had converted a considerable part of Europe into forests; and the same solitude which gave an asylum to the beasts of the field, afforded security to large bands of robbers, who were generally sure of purchasing, by a participation of their plunder, the protection and assistance of the little tyrants in their neighbourhood. *At every bridge and on every road, enormous tolls were exacted; and passengers were often plundered by the castellains through whose territories they passed.*" I will only add to this statement, that, reasoning from the spirit of the age, as exemplified in *Jocular Tenures*, it does not seem improbable that ridiculous and degrading usages should have been enforced upon travellers at bridges, &c.; and it is probable that the romancers had some sort of foundation for this, as well as for their other incidents in real life.

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NOTES TO CANTO XXIII.

[1] St. xxxiv. ll. 1 and 2.—Such oaths are common in romance, and were not once without example in real history. Froissart speaks of seeing certain English nobles with one eye blinded with a patch, which they had sworn not to uncover till they should have made a certain number of prisoners in the French wars.

[2] St. lxx. l. 1.—Though this assertion is in character with Mandricardo, there is no colour for it in the story of the *Innamorato*. Agrican, king of Tartary, and the father of Mandricardo, who is one of the most distinguished heroes of that poem, was slain by Orlando in single combat. Having fought during the greater part of a day, the two duellists were interrupted by night, and lay down, side by side, for the purpose of repose. Entering now into conversation,

'Fast they carped and courteously,
Of deeds of arms and of venerie,' &c.

in the true spirit of knights-errant. Unfortunately, however, they were of less endurance in the wars of words than in that of blows, and each feeling himself less capable of maintaing his opinion by sayings than doings, was impatient to renew the battle. The battle *was* renewed, and Agrican, after many vicissitudes of fortune, mortally wounded. Orlando had by this time sufficiently inculcated the necessity of baptism, which Agrican had before contemptuously refused; and the conquerer, alighting from his horse, administers this rite, with a tenderness which forms a whimsical contrast to the other part of the adventure.

[3] St. lxxxiii. ll. 5, 6, 7, 8.—*Two hinds contending for the mead's boundary*, may appear a more natural image to an Englishman, unless conversant with a water-meadow-district, than their contending for the *water's right*, but to an Italian must appear to the full as probable a cause of quarrel. And Mr. Forsyth (the acute author of *Remarks upon Italy*) would derive rivalry (*rivalitas*) from the *river* quarrels of the ancient inhabitants of Italy.

[4] St. cxxvi. ll. 1 and 2.—It may be here remarked that the poet has given great effect to Ariosto's picture of Orlando's madness, by laying his scene in the spot which he has chosen. Upon the same principle, he has sent Mandricardo and Doralice to consummate their loves in a rustic retirement; and while the solitude of the country gives more relief to pictures of passions or manners, in works of fiction, it would seem that it charmed us also by the mere repose which it affords. Don Quixote is never so interesting as at the Duke's, nor the Spectator as at Sir Roger de Coverley's. Shakespeare, when he has almost worn out Falstaff, presents him to us as fresh as ever, eating a dish of caraways and pippins in Master Shallow's orchard; and though hardly any thing remarkable is said or done by either of them, we delight in watching Gil Blas and Scipio at *Lirias*, and contemplate them with pleasure when taking their *siesta* under its shades.

NOTES TO CANTO XXIV.

[1] St. xii. l. 5.—The sweet acorns, among which is that of the ilex, are a common article of food with the peasantry in some parts of southern Europe;

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and the reader will recollect the letter of the duchess in Don Quixote to Sancho's wife, desiring a supply. It was this which led the poets to suppose them the exclusive food of man during the golden age. They are not, after all, so bad a substitute for something better, as might be conceived; and the mountain peasantry of warm countries (to their praise be it spoken!) will accommodate themselves to worse provision. The inhabitants of the Tuscan Apennines make the fruit of the *wild chestnut* (I am not sure that it is the same as our horse chestnut) and ground pulse into bread; and the traveller, in a season of scarcity, may find beech leaves boiling in their pots, as an esculent vegetable.

[2] St. xxx. ll. 1 and 2.—Aric to forgets that he is making Odorico do what he said Zerbino could not do (and what he would have done if he could), though precisely in the same situation, that is, bound upon a sorry hackney, the ordinary conveyance of malefactors. This and some other similar inadvertencies may seem to make against the care and precision for which I have given the poet credit. But it is in his pictures of passion and manners, and in the general conduct of his story, that these are conspicuous. In mere facts, upon which nothing seems to depend, he is *sometimes* careless or forgetful.

[2] St. lix. l. 2.—He means that he had established his claim to it, when he won the other arms of Hector in the castle of the Syrian fairy; as related in the Innamorato.

[3] St. lxxix. ll. 5, 6, 7, 8.—Having first destined Zerbino's soul for the myrtle-grove appropriated to departed lovers, Ariosto makes him anticipate his descent into a *penal* hell; why, except for the purpose of justifying this ardent profession of love, it is difficult to understand. If he had been a Moor, the doctrines of every Christian, in our poet's age, would, I believe, have assigned him such a hereafter; but he was a Christian prince, and is only known to us for his many virtues, and for being as amiable as he is virtuous. As odd as the supposed sentence passed upon him, is his supposed foppishness, which is traditional in Italy, where *Zerbinotto* is as universally received an equivalent for a *dandy* as *Gradasso* for a *bully*. But nothing is to be found in justification of this scandal, that I am aware of, either in this work or elsewhere.

[5] St. cxiii. ll. 7 and 8.—Mandricardo and Rodomont, in the spirit of gallantry, plighted their troth before Doralice, according to the forms observed before a feudal superior.

END OF VOL. I.

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